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THEIR MEANING AND RELATION

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to

SISIRDA

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ABBREVIATIONS OF BOOKS REFERRED TO IN THE FOOTNOTES

A. *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Pāṇini.

A.A.I. *The Art and Architecture of India*, Benjamin Rowland, Penguin Books, 1st ed., 3rd imp., 1954.

A.B. *Abhinava-Bhāratī*, a commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, 1st ed., Vol. I, 1926, Vol. II, 1934, Baroda.

A.K. *Amarakośa*, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series No. XXXVIII, Trivandrum, 1914.

A.S. 'Amarāvatī Sculptures in the Madras Govt. Museum', C. Śivarāma Mūrti, *Bulletin of the Madras Govt. Museum*, New Series, General Section, Vol. IV, Madras, 1942.

Bht. *Barhut*, Benimādhab Barua, Fine Arts Series no. III, Indian Research Institute, Calcutta, 1937.

B.K. *Bharatakośa*, compiled by M. Rāmakrishna Kavi, Śri Venkaṭeśvara Oriental Series, no. 30, Tirupati, 1951.

B.P. *Bhāvaprakāśa*, Śāradātanaya, Gaekwad's Oriental Series, no. XLV, Baroda, 1930.

D.R. *Daśarūpaka*, Dhanañjaya, 5th ed., Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, Bombay, 1941.

E.T. of N.Ś. English Translation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Vol. I, Dr. Manomohana Ghosh, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1950.

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M.S. *The Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol. II, Sir John Marshall, A. Foucher and N. C. Majumdar.

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S.K. *Siddhānta-kaumudī*, Bhattojī Dīkṣita, Nirṇaya Sāgara Press, 8th ed., Bombay, 1942.

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S. Rāja *Saṅgītarāja*, Mahārāṇā Kumbha, Vol. I, Gaṅgā Oriental Series no. 4, Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner, 1946.

S.R. V-f. *Sanskrit Roots, Verb-forms*, W. D. Whitney, Leipzig, 1885, and Lithoprint, Edwards, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1950.

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PREFACE

In the following pages I have attempted a brief examination of certain aspects of the arts of *nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*. Interest in the Indian arts is on the increase, and those who care for the deeper values of life should not be afraid of revaluing reputations, old and new, if the Indian Renaissance is to be anything more than a passing phase, nor mind a little excursus in the region of theory. That responsibility none can, nor should, escape.

The few words that are necessary here are not intended to crave the reader's pardon for the blemishes, if any, in what follows; nor are they meant to cajole him into sharing the views and conclusions of the author without question. Reasonable differences of opinion are always welcome.

I should like to state briefly the idea or ideas which have been uppermost in my mind when this work was undertaken. The day, when those who want to study the theory of Indian arts from Sanskrit sources can easily do so without struggling with textual problems, has not yet come. Yet it seems that in modern times much attention is being paid to the literary aspect of theories of arts in India. By contrast the question of the art form is quite neglected. Too much philosophizing is another constant feature. Art has its own philosophy and appeal. Ignoring them, we have cultivated the habit of reading in them our pet philosophies. Thanks to all this, the results of the study have failed to become living, that is, they have not reached the various levels of society. Incompetent writings are on the increase, supported by the glamour surrounding certain names. No wonder the intelligent understanding of the arts suffers. So far as practice of the arts goes, the commercial elements are very rapidly changing the classical spirit by the argument that change is inevitable and an indication of dynamism. This philosophy of change may in some cases be true, but in our particular context it is little better than an excuse. The decline of discrimination is lamentable, and ought to be resisted by all who care for aesthetic values.

In the author's opinion, these are tendencies that should be got rid

of at the earliest. With this view an exploratory attempt has been made in the limited field of definitions and relations of *nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* in such a manner that the contents of the work might reach the cultured reader who is not a specialist in the theory as found in Sanskrit. The insistence on certain clarifications may not be necessary for a specialist. From this point of view it might be said that the treatment is not scholastic. To this view I cannot agree. On the other hand, if the cultured, but not specialist reader feels uneasy owing to certain textual details, briefly presented here, that will need looking into. But he too should not expect that he can acquire sound knowledge without being prepared to undergo some labour. Art, also, has its own austerities. If, however, he feels that this work is not meant for him, that is a pity, for the work was undertaken with the hope that it might serve the growing need of the day.

Turning to the task of thanking my mentors, friends and well-wishers, I must first mention that it was due to the pure love for learning and *śiṣya-vātsalya* of the late Dr. P. C. Bagchi, Vice-Chancellor and Director of Research Studies of Visva-Bharati, that I had the opportunity of working as a Research Scholar. The present book is concerned with only one of the subjects on which I have been working for some years now. I am extremely sad that I was not able to complete the work during Dr. Bagchi's lifetime. Still I sincerely believe that this will please his *pañca skandhas* in whatever composition they may now be.

Dr. Sisirkumar Ghose of Santiniketan, to whom this small book is dedicated as a token of gratitude, has been one of my genuine well-wishers all through. I have learnt from him several things, including English; thus he is my teacher too. But for his unreserved help, this work might not have reached its present shape.

Mr. Roy North of Orient Longmans, formerly Professor of English, Visva-Bharati, has not spared pains to attend to details through every stage of production. For this I shall always be indebted to him.

Sjt. Santideb Ghose of the Sangeeta-Bhavana, Visva-Bharati, was also kind enough to render me his help and advice and I am grateful to him. My thanks are also due to Mr. P. S. N. Raju who went through the typescript. I am also thankful to Mrs. Barwell

and other friends whose sympathies were available to me. Last but not least I owe much to the staff of Orient Longmans Private Ltd., Calcutta, for the care with which they have looked after its publication.

K. M. Varma

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NATYA, NRTTA AND NRTYA: THEIR MEANING AND RELATION

INTRODUCTION

THESE days the meaning of the arts of *nāṭya* (drama), *nṛtta* (dance) and *nṛtya*[1] is so uncertain depending largely on the bias and vagary of the individual critic. This makes it rather difficult, if not impossible, to present the many views that are battling for acceptance. But, broadly speaking, and keeping in view those few who have a knowledge, of some kind or other, of Indian aesthetic theories, if one has to mention the prevalent theory or belief it would be as follows: *nṛtta* is devoid of either *rasa* or *bhāva* and is based on sheer physical gestures and movements supported by the tempo (or *laya* and *tāla*), while *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* convey *rasa* and *bhāva* respectively. This will explain the tendency, prevailing at least in some quarters, to look down upon *nṛtta* as an inferior form of art. This is a complete misconception, although based on some theories and definitions that came into vogue in medieval times. To these, therefore, we must now turn.

MEDIEVAL CONCEPT

FROM among the extant works on the subject the first brief account of theory that we come across is in Dhanañjaya's *Daśarūpaka*. This is a work belonging to the tenth century A.D. This theory receives further elucidation from Dhanika who is supposed to be Dhanañjaya's brother and is thus a younger contemporary. Hence it may not be unreasonable if no distinction is made between the author and his commentator while presenting this theory. Dhanañjaya says:

[1] As we shall see, *nṛtya* is a resultant art of the combination of dance and *abhinayas*, including *vācika*, (verbal communication) and thus a representational art. As such it cannot be properly translated by words like mimicry, pantomime, etc., as some have done. On our part we cannot give any exact equivalent in English. One may suggest representational dance or *danse communicante* or *danse communicatrice*.

avasthānukṛtir nāṭyam

.. .. ..

daśadhaiva rasāśrayam
anyad bhāvāśrayaṃ nṛtyam
nṛttaṃ tāla-layāśrayam
ādyaṃ padārthābhinayo
mārgo deśī tathā param[1]

A separate explanation of the above definitions is not called for and we may give an explanation of it on the basis of Dhanika's commentary. This is because the commentator does not obviously give anything which deviates from the author's main ideas. Dhanika explains them in the following way: The word *nāṭya* is derived from the √*naṭa* meaning *avaspandana* i.e. quivering, and he further specifies *avaspandana* to be *kiñciccalana*[2], slight or rather subtle movement. Since *nāṭya* needs subtle physical movement, its need for *sāttvikābhinaya* or the act of mental communication is greater. *Nṛtya* is derived from the √*nṛt* meaning *gātravikṣepa* or 'throwing' the limbs i.e. to dance, and its performer is called *nartaka*. *Nṛtya*, as the world knows, is *prekṣaṇīyaka*, spectacular, whereas *nāṭya* is both spectacular and audible.[3] *Nāṭya* has recourse to *rasa* (bliss that centres round a constant mood) i.e. *rasa* is expressed by means of *nāṭya*, (*rasāśrayaṃ nāṭyam*) while *nṛtya* is the recourse to *bhāva* (mental mood or a given transitory mental condition), (*nṛtyaṃ bhāvāśrayam*). Thus *nāṭya* which is (*i*) audio-visual, (*ii*) expressive of *rasa*, (*iii*) possessing abundantly the aspect of *sāttvikābhinaya* and (*iv*) having *naṭa* as its performer differs in four points from *nṛtya* which is (*i*) spectacular, (*ii*) expressive of *bhāva*, (*iii*) possessing abundantly *āṅgikābhinaya* (the act of physical communication) and

[1] D. R., Ch. I, verses 7 and 9, pp. 2–3.

[2] The meaning of this root is read variously in different places. In the *dhātupāṭha* given as an appendix to the particular edition of S. K., which is used here, *avasyandana* is found (p. 745) as its meaning while in the body of the text *avaskandana* (p. 418). But in the Bālamanoramā edition (Madras, 1929) of the S.K. it is found as *avaspandana* (Vol. II, p. 868) like in the D. R. Such a variation is also found elsewhere and thus it deserves a separate investigation.

[3] Dhanika says regarding *nṛtya* only that '*loke'pi cātra prekṣaṇīyaka miti vyavahārāt*'. By this, it seems, that he means that it is not audible. Following this we have added in our explanation that *nāṭya* is both to be heard and seen.

(*iv*) having *nartaka* as its performer.[1] A point of agreement between them may also be noted, namely *anukāra* or *anukṛti*, meaning representation. That is to say, both of them represent something, so they are representational. This is what Dhanika says in the main regarding *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*.

This description of *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* as *rasāśraya* and *bhāvāśraya* respectively is elaborated or rather put into other words by Dhanika in the following manner : *nāṭya* is *vākyārthābhinayātmaka* and *nṛtya* is *padārthābhinayātmaka*. These compound words are very popular nowadays as *vākyārthābhinayaṃ nāṭyaṃ* and *padārthābhinayaṃ nṛtyaṃ*. Quite often we are hearing discourses supposed to be based on the above phrases even from persons who cannot properly pronounce these words. Not only do they not know what is meant here by *vākyārtha* and *padārtha*, but they are also quite ignorant of the real significance of the word *abhinaya*. Fantastically enough, people generally understand *abhinaya* as facial expression or the movements of the facial muscles of expression alone, they do not realise that the movement in the main limbs is also a part of the total meaning. So it may not be entirely out of place, when popular misconceptions are taken into account, to explain these, however briefly. So far as *abhinaya* goes, it is interpreted in several ways. All these interpretations cannot, of course, be touched upon here, except to mention what *abhinaya* means according to Bharata's theory as we understand it.

Abhinaya means an act of communication or to specify it, it is an act of the performer which is meant to communicate something. This act of communication is conditioned or determined by the human activity as a whole, the human activity which has its reference in everyday life. This is the fact which gives birth to variety in *abhinaya*. It has been customary in India from the good old ages to conceive or classify human activity as belonging to three categories, namely, mind, voice and body (*mano-vāk-kāya*). Our *sāttvika*, *vācika* and *āṅgika abhinayas* are respectively the result of

[1] Their derivation may not be counted as a fifth point of disagreement, because the purpose of stressing derivation here is to have a clear idea about what particular *abhinaya* plays a greater role in a given art and the difference caused by a necessity of a given *abhinaya* is already counted. This is the trend that is followed or can be noticed in the commentary.

this threefold division of human activity. There are certain other things which do not come under innate human activities. These are dress, ornaments, and so on. From the practical point of view, i.e. from the point of view of communication, they are useful in the dramaturgic art, so they are looked upon as a fourth activity. This is indicated by naming it *āhārya*, 'owned' or to put it literally, 'borrowed'. Therefore, *abhinaya* does not cover the movement of the face or feet alone, but the whole human activity. This little clarification about *abhinaya* will do for the present and should help to remove ambiguity in discussion.

Let us now turn to the *vākyārtha* and *padārtha*. Literally, they connote 'meaning of sentence and meaning of words.' But this literal meaning does not clarify all that is to be known about them. In Indian aesthetic theory *bhāvas* are said to contribute to *rasa* both in a general and an auxiliary way (*sāmānya-guṇa-yogena*). The relation between *bhāva* and *rasa* has been explained in some ages on the analogy of the relation of the meaning of a word to that of the sentence. So, in a context like this, *vākyārtha* and *padārtha* do not denote simply their literal sense (i.e. meaning of sentence and meaning of words). In fact, what they mean is that *vākyārtha* stands for *rasa* which is similar to the meaning of a sentence and *padārtha* stands for *bhāvas* which are similar to word meaning. Thus the words *vākyārthābhinaya* and *padārthābhinaya* on the one hand and *rasābhinaya* and *bhāvābhinaya* on the other, are similar usages. In this theory *nṛtya* can never be called *vākyārthābhinayātmaka* because it is, according to this very theory, confined to express only *bhāva* which is analogous to *padārtha*. Similarly, *nāṭya* can never be called *padārthābhinayātmaka* because *bhāvas* which are analogous to *padārthas*, as such will not figure in it and they will merge in *rasa* which is analogous to *vākyārtha*.

This assumption that *nṛtya* and *nāṭya* are respectively expressive of only *bhāvas* and *rasa*, has helped the theorists to determine the difference between *nṛtya* and *nāṭya*. In this connection Dhanika lays stress on this point by saying that although both *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* are representational, yet *nāṭya* which is *vākyārthābhinayātmaka* is quite different from the *nṛtya* which is *pādārthābhinayātmaka* just as *nṛtya* is different from *nṛtta* because of its representational character (*anukārātmakatva*) which the latter lacks, although both

of them are identical in so far as *aṅgavikṣepa* (lit. throwing limbs) is a common factor.

Aṅgavikṣepa, we notice, according to these theorists is a common feature between *nṛtya* and *nṛtta*. This *aṅgavikṣepa* the theorists all along consider to be the main or sole feature that *nṛtta* ever had. Of course they qualify it and then this feature together with its qualifications becomes the definition of *nṛtta*. Dhanika says that *nṛtta* is *aṅgavikṣepa* wanting in only *laya* and *tāla* (i.e. simply following tempo) and devoid of *abhinaya* (*abhinayaśūnya*). Here *abhinayaśūnya* ultimately means that it is devoid of *rasa*. If so, *nṛtta* according to these theorists is a mere physical movement devoid of *rasa* but regularised by tempo.

The authors of this theory mention also the other names of *nṛtya* and *nṛtta*, names which were popular or widely known (*prasiddha*) in their times or even before. They refer to *nṛtya* as *mārga*, classical, and *nṛtta* as *deśī*, popular.[1] This presupposes certain principles and conditions only by means of which is the classification possible. But for reasons unknown they do not clarify this point.

With regard to the utility or purpose of *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* they mention that in *nāṭya nṛtya* is sometimes useful in expressing *bhāva* introduced through the topic (*avāntarapadārtha*) while *nṛtta* is useful as a beautifying factor (*śobhāhetutvena*).[2] This is stated because of the attempt they make to explain *nāṭya* or certain aspects of it in a concise form. What is a point of interest here to us, for the present, is not their intention (whatever it may be), but the description of *nṛtta* as *śobhāhetu*. What precisely they mean by *śobhā* and how that *śobhā* is brought into *nāṭya*, on both these points they are equally silent. But it is clear that by *śobhā* they mean something other than *rasa* and *bhāva* which *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* are said to possess respectively. So we may conclude that *śobhā* here means that which pleases the eye.

Thus, according to this theory, *nāṭya* is expressive of *rasa*, *nṛtya* is expressive of *bhāva* and *nṛtta* is that which causes beauty perceived by the eye.

This is all that these theorists have to say with regard to the nature

[1] This term is sometimes translated as 'folk'. But the word *deśī* covers a much wider meaning than the word folk. Further, it is also not a proper word.

[2] *See* D.R., Ch. I, verse 10 and also Commentary, p. 3.

of the three arts as well as the difference existing among them. This theory, it is true, we have from Dhanañjaya and Dhanika, but a host of earlier works have been lost and the theory may not be, in a proprietary sense, theirs.

This conclusion seems plausible when the fact that these authors are trying to present existing theories in a concise form is kept in mind. Further, with regard to the distinction between *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*, the word *aṅgavikṣepa* is used in Harṣa's *vārtika* quoted by Abhinava and Amarasiṃha, earliest of the known lexicographers, who mentions *aṅgavikṣepa* as synonymous with *aṅgahāra*.[1] From these it may be inferred that it is likely that this kind of concept, though not perhaps of the same wording, was current from quite earlier centuries. Nevertheless, no definite date or period for the beginnings of this concept can, in the present circumstances, be fixed.

In the period following Dhanañjaya and Dhanika this theory does not lose its ground. It has held its position even to the present day. Later writers, like Vidyānātha, follow *Daśarūpaka* in this matter.[2] There is no reason to assume that the later writers get this theory from sources earlier than the *Daśarūpaka*. On the contrary, it is quite evident from their writings that for the theory they are indebted to *Daśarūpaka* itself. The virtue of this theory is not by itself the sole reason for its popularity. Generally speaking, the age after the tenth century A.D., as S. K. De rightly points out,[3] was one in which many text-books were written on the subject of aesthetics. One can refer to Dhanañjaya's own words in order to point out that *Daśarūpaka* itself is nothing but a text-book[4] and it is quite popular even now. This is the case with the works, like *Pratāparudrīya* and others, which in many matters follow *Daśarūpaka*

[1] *See* A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 172; A.K., Kāṇḍa I, *Nāṭyavarga*, Sl. 16 (Vol. I, p. 145).

[2] *See* P.R., p. 72. Depending on K. P. Trivedi's edition of this work, D. R. Mankad notes that Vidyānātha thinks *nṛtta* to be *bhāvāśraya* and *nṛtya tālalayāśraya*. Even without support from any MS. this could have been amended in the light of D.R., but Mankad does not do so. The edition we have used reads it exactly as D.R. does. So Mankad's conclusion needs revision. *See* T.S.D., pp. 13-14.

[3] *See* H.S.P., Vol. II, p. 270 et seq.

[4] *See* D.R., Ch. I, pp. 1-2

as well as borrow from it. To some extent, the popularity of these books is the factor by which this theory, as it is, could find favour even up to the present time in spite of some endeavour to modify it even several centuries back. As we shall note, some authors, for instance Mahārāṇā Kumbha, Vipradāsa, are not content with some points in this theory and while agreeing with the theorists in general they at the same time amend it. Nevertheless, this theory, as a whole, is never totally abandoned. If one were to note the minute differences of various authors, a good number of quasi-theories could be recorded, though such differences may not be always quite significant. These subsidiary theories require a separate investigation, which does not come within the scope of our present endeavour, since we intend to deal with only the important development of the theory of the arts — *nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*.

THE MEDIEVAL CONCEPT EXAMINED

ALTHOUGH this theory contains several points which are neither untrue nor to be denied, yet the way they have been put forward is certainly defective. As a result these definitions or even this theory in its total form have become quite misleading. For instance, these theorists, as pointed out already, tend to think of *nṛtta* as devoid of *rasa* and *bhāva*. This is obvious from their expression [*tan* (*laya-tāla*) *mātrāpekṣo'ṅga-vikṣepo'bhinaya-śūnyaḥ*]. Following them, later writers have put it in indisputable words: *rasa-bhāva-vihīnaṃ tu nṛtta mityabhidhīyate.*[1] Following the fashion of the well-known qualitative classification of *kāvya*, poem, some critics have designated *nṛtta* as *adhama*, inferior among these three.

Such expressions unmistakably reveal the attitude, if not the understanding, of medieval authors towards *nṛtta*. Though it may not be an act of open contempt, it surely amounts to a looking down upon *nṛtta* and lowering its virtues. This calls for serious refutation. In reality *nṛtta* is an art *par excellence*, it gives birth to *nṛtya* and above all inspires the early sculptures of India, educating them in the geometrical qualities, qualities which distinguish Indian sculpture throughout the ages that followed. If it cannot evoke *rasa* in the hearts of spectators, then why are people so fascinated

[1] *Bharatakalpalatā* as quoted in B.K., p. 875.

to see its performance? Is it to please their eyes looking at the *śobhā*, and is this *śobhā* similar to that of a flower in nature or is it similar to some decoration? The act of looking down upon *nṛtta* would be, as it no doubt was, a result of a wrong view of what *śobhā* means. The phrase *aṅgavikṣepa* is not selective, if not unworthy, to give the proper idea of *nṛtta*. As we have already noted Amarasiṃha lists *aṅgavikṣepa* and *aṅgahāra* as synonyms. Being a lexicographer he might have copied it from earlier sources. Whatever may be the reasons for this kind of description of *nṛtta* and *aṅgahāra*, the √*kṣip* prefixed by *vi* literally never gives the meaning of well thought out and composed limbs of the body, and medieval theorists, with perhaps few exceptions, do not try through their definitions to give this meaning to the word. Abhinava once utilises this word and says that *aṅgavikṣepa* means gracefully composed limbs or graceful composition of limbs, (*gātrāṇāṃ vilāsena kṣepaḥ*)[1] and while interpreting thus, he thinks of it in terms of *aṅgahāras*. This explanation is an act of adjustment, but hardly admissible. *Aṅgavikṣepa* cannot convey the meaning of *aṅgahāra*. This is proved by the misunderstanding to which it has led. Although every writer repeats the phrase *aṅgahāra*, yet no writer thinks in terms of *aṅgahāra* while mentioning *nṛtta* to be *aṅgavikṣepa*. Therefore, each and every one of the later authors uses this word not in the sense in which Abhinava does. In any case, such a meaning is not popularly known.

With regard to *rasa* and *bhāva* in this theory as the distinguishing factors between *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*, the distinction is not precise. Whether or not there is any bearing on the distinction between *rasa-dhvani* and *bhāva-dhvani* in this, it is difficult to say. It would be no wonder if the present distinction takes its origin before Ānandavardhana's exposition of *dhvani* in the eighth century A.D. It is extremely difficult to suppose that the former is analogous to the latter. Whatever may be the truth regarding the relation of these two distinguishing factors, so far as *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* are concerned, they cannot be distinguished on the basis of *rasa* and *bhāva*. In the ultimate sense there is no *bhāva* without *rasa* and vice versa, as Bharata puts it clearly: *na bhāvahīno'sti raso na bhāvo rasavargitaḥ*.[2] Even if we do not always think in terms of the

[1] A.B., Vol. I, p. 21.

[2] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 6, p. 294.

ultimate sense and wish *nṛtya* to be defined as *bhāvāśraya* on the basis of other considerations, for example the stress, this theory does not seem proper and precise. Let us suppose that a particular theme is so treated that in it a particular *bhāva* gains supremacy over the other things, that is, stands out in the spectator's mind. When such themes are performed, *nṛtya* may be called *bhāvāśraya*. But there is no reason for restricting it to a performance of such themes alone. When such a theme is performed with the help of *nṛtya*, it may become one variety of it, but it cannot be everything and in fact it should not be such. By *nṛtya* such a theme could as well be performed in which what is solely expressed is a *rasa*. Therefore, this definition is defective.

This has been felt by some, like Kumbha Rāṇā and Vipradāsa. These later writers say that *rasa* is made to be manifested by *nṛtya* while *bhāvas* are accompanying it and similarly *bhāva* is made to be manifested by *nṛtya* while *rasa* is accompanying it. Both these things are possible, and in either case it retains the name *nṛtya*. Thus, in order to distinguish them, they name the former variety as *nāṭya-nṛtya* and the latter as *mārganṛtya*. At the same time they retain and reserve the word *deśī* for *nṛtta*, in the same fashion as Dhanañjaya and Dhanika do. Now they put these three in order of *uttama*, superior; *madhyama*, ordinary; and *adhama*, inferior in accordance with their merit, the merit as conceived by these writers.[1] In this explanation of these later writers the important point is their acceptance of the fact that *rasa* may also be manifested by *nṛtya*.

We have seen that these, and generally all, medieval theorists designate *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* respectively as *mārga* and *deśī*. That means they are not ready to accept any kind of *nṛtta* as *mārga*. But they themselves say that an art that is created and popularised by Masters is called *mārga* and an art that is practised by different people of various regions in keeping with their taste is called *deśī*. In fact, *deśī* art, which is nowadays called folk art, is also learnt from the teachers and is governed by certain rules of its own. Then what is the difference between them? In the *deśi* type of art science is

[1] Kumbha Rāṇā and Vipradāsa as quoted in B.K., p. 875 and pp. 340-1 respectively.

a part of it i.e. the artists as well the teachers are not conscious of it, so it is not studied separately from art. On the contrary, in the *mārga* type of art its science is a conscious study. When we look at the subject in this light, *nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata must be called *mārga*. Bharata's treatment of *nṛtta* proves it beyond any doubt. There are other types of prevailing *nṛttas* which we touch upon later are logically and certainly to be called *deśī*. Therefore, the medieval theorists are again far from being correct.

But a still later writer, Vipradāsa, probably realized this inadequacy and gives a different explanation for the word *mārga*. (For reference see p. 9, footnote 1.) Depending only on some passages quoted by others it is difficult to reach any definite conclusions about the reasons which lead him to give a different explanation to this word. What he says is this. The word *mārga* means *bhāva*, so *mārganṛtya* means *nṛtya* which is exclusively confined to the evocation of *bhāva*. This, as mentioned earlier, is different from *nāṭyanṛtya* which can evoke *rasa* too. But he is not able to give any separate explanation for the word *deśī*. In this matter he asks us to accept the designation of *nṛtta* as *deśī* without questioning because ancient pandits say so. His explanation may hold good in case of the classification of *nṛtya* as *nāṭyanṛtya* and *mārganṛtya*, but it leads nowhere in the case of designating *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* as *mārga* and *deśī* respectively. In fact, it is not known that *mārga* could mean *bhāva*. Probably he might have said this as a kind of extended meaning. Apart from this, *mārga* and *deśī* are inseparable and are together used as contraries. Thus there is no reason why one should always refer to *nṛtta*, indiscriminately, as *deśī*.

Thus the medieval theory seen for the first time in *Daśarūpaka* fails not only in its definition of *nṛtta* as mere *aṅgavikṣepa*, but also by defining *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* as *rasāśraya* and *bhāvāśraya* respectively. It proves that almost all of the later theories based, as they are, in one way or the other, on this *Daśarūpaka* theory, are bound to be misleading, at least in certain vital aspects. In that case there is a need to see if earlier theories cannot give us a better understanding of these arts.

SOME VIEWS ABOUT THE ORIGIN AND RELATION

For these we have to go back seven or eight centuries to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata. There is no work of the period between the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Daśarūpaka* available to us. The *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the earliest of the extant works on these arts, provides ample material for study and improved understanding of the problem. We should consider this text very carefully and to do that it is better to consider it separately from its later interpretations. Its only available commentary, *Abhinavabhāratī*, is by Abhinavagupta who lived at the end of the tenth and in the beginning of the eleventh centuries, that is, in the same age in which Dhanañjaya and Dhanika lived. Abhinava occasionally quotes his predecessors, including Harṣa belonging to the seventh century A.D. Such short quotations, however, do not give us a comprehensive idea about the different views expressed in them and it is not possible to arrive at conclusions on their slender basis. They can only provide a vague or a faint idea about some of the views of those other commentators whose total works are, unfortunately, not available. But the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* undergoes some change, or changes, and also a vast development of the art of *nṛtya* had taken place by the time those writers began to interpret the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in their own ways. It would be misleading to come to conclusions by looking at it through the eyes of these commentators alone, however competent their exposition and criticism may be. This is not to deny their value. If and when their statements contain truth then they must be given due consideration. But modern scholarship, we are afraid, depends too much on Abhinava and explains everything that is said by him in the name of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. This hampers us in tracing the real development, and our understanding, of the original thought. In order to save ourselves from this danger we should try to understand the *Nāṭyaśāstra* independently of the commentators.

Generally speaking, it is easy to trace the relation existing among things, provided we have clear ideas about them, that is, of their concept or definitions. Because of the place of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in the evolution of these arts, it will be helpful in understanding the early concepts regarding these arts if the relationships are

considered first. These relationships in their turn call for some idea about the origin of the respective arts.

It is now generally accepted that the √*naṭa* is derived from the √*nṛt*, or the √*naṭa* is the prākṛtised form of Sanskrit √*nṛt*. It is thus noted in modern works, for instance, Whitney and Monier M. Williams.[1] According to the Vedic usages, it is also said that the √*nṛt* is earlier than the √*naṭa*. Since both the roots are seen in Pāṇini, we are to suppose that in the view of those who argue for the above derivation, this process had taken place long before Pāṇini, it cannot otherwise find a place in a grammatical work. Pāṇini reads it twice in *bhvādi*, one of the ten groups of roots that he mentioned in his grammar, with lingual *n*, while reading it in the *curādi* group of roots with dental *n*. It is for the linguists to find out if this fact proves anything. On the basis of linguistic conclusions like this, if people try to deduce that *nāṭya* is derived from *nṛtta* or *nṛtya*, that would be completely erroneous, because such derivations may prove how the vocal organs of the people living in a given age worked, but not more, like the concepts. It is a common practice that after a child is born a name is selected and given to him; but no child will be born because a name is there or selected. Similarly the birth of *nāṭya* is expected to necessitate a name for itself. But the word *nāṭya* derived from the √*naṭa* which even if itself is derived from the √*nṛt*, cannot cause the birth of a thing, viz., *nāṭya*. There is every chance for *nāṭya* to be born independently of *nṛtta*, so, unless it is proved by other material that *nāṭya* is born from *nṛtta*, it is illogical to say that *nāṭya* (not the word but the thing) is born or derived from *nṛtta*. The derivation of a word is an entirely different thing from the laws of the origin of its meaning. In the concepts or definitions the etymological meaning alone would not suffice, even though it may in most cases remain as a part of the whole concept or definition. Therefore in the province of art these linguistic considerations, like the derivations of words, even if they are established, have no value, unless they are proved definitely to have a bearing on a given concept.

Till recently a section of scholars engaged in the studies of Indology found everything of Indian culture to belong to the Aryan race alone and faithfully indulged in seeking out relationships with and borrowings from Greek culture. With such a biased attitude and

[1] *See* S.R. V-f., p. 87; and S.E.D., p. 525.

preconceived notions they naturally failed to see any other elements in it. And even those who did not suffer from the Aryan bias were not always in a position to utilise the non-Aryan sources. But now it is a growing and general contention that Indian culture, as a whole, is not the culture of one race or one tribe or of one section of the people, but it is essentially a culture that grew from the contributions of several peoples and it contains various elements in it. Not much progress in investigation has, however, been made on this new and obviously truer hypothesis, which means that we are still in the region of those old theories. In this connection it may not be in vain to investigate whether the √*naṭa* originally belonged to the non-Aryan group of the languages with a meaning similar to that recorded in the *Dhātupāṭha* of Pāṇini and which has been later incorporated into the Sanskrit. It is particularly necessary to take into consideration what are called the Dravidian languages while investigating some of these questions as the ones on which we are at present engaged. Without paying due and equal attention to those languages, it may be impossible, at least in some respects, to do justice to the arts in question. Some words like *nikuṭṭana*, *vañcita*, and so on, which are technically used in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, lead to the impression that they originally belonged to the Dravidian languages. This seems probable in view of the frank tribute paid by Bharata to the people of South India, viz., *tatra dākṣiṇātyās tāvad bahunṛtta-gīta-vādyāḥ kaiśikīprāyās caturamadhura-lalitāṅgābhinayāś ca.*[1] Until these sources are also explored, the theory that the √*naṭa* is a prākṛtised form of Sanskrit √*nṛt*, need not be taken as a settled fact. Our contention is that in the province of arts linguistic theories will be of no value unless they are definitely proved to have a bearing on the concepts of given arts.

Therefore, it is not wise to linger over knotty and inconclusive linguistic considerations to settle the question of the origin of *nāṭya*, when unmistakable concepts are there waiting for greater consideration. In fact, if these concepts are not reliable, there is no other way to trace the origin of these arts. In the case of *nāṭya*, the linguistic conclusions may or may not hold good while in the case of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*, etymologically belonging to one and the same √*nṛt*, no such conclusions are possible. This means that we have

[1] N.Ś., Vol. II, Ch. 13, p. 207.

ultimately to depend on the concepts themselves. We can have concrete ideas about these three arts with the help of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, in other words, the concrete concepts are available from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is easy and helpful to have a definite knowledge of concepts and the possible conclusions drawn from them, in working out the ambiguous and remote problems like linguistic ones. So let us not mix up what is clear with the ambiguous and create needless perplexity. Our sole concern is with the concepts alone.

D.R. Mankad discusses at length in his book, *The Types of Sanskrit Drama*, the problems of the origin and evolution of these arts—*nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*. His conclusion is: 'From the point of view of evolution, first comes *nṛtta*, then *nṛtya* and last *nāṭya*. *Nṛtta* is mere dance, *nṛtya* had gesture added to it, while *nāṭya* had speech (i.e. dialogue) too. Thus *nāṭya* incorporated all the three features—dance, music and speech—which are so essential for the creation of drama.'[1] To trace thus the evolution of these arts, he adopts *abhinaya*, theme, acts, number of actors, and so on, as means. With the help of these and the presumed order of these arts, Mankad reaches the conclusion regarding the development of *uparūpakas*, generally called *nṛtya*, and the order of development of *rūpakas*, too, which are generally called *nāṭya*. All these details need not be presented here. Further, he traces the origin of some *rūpakas* from the *uparūpakas*. Although the elements like theme, acts, etc., may not be unmistakable proofs, yet they may be sometimes adopted as a means to trace the development and such is the popular method too. Nevertheless, Mankad's way of dealing with the subject is unscientific. It is well known that all the ten *rūpakas* are fully dealt with in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* which is generally assumed to belong to the second or the third century A.D. To develop *rūpakas* from one another, according to the process accepted by Mankad, takes some time and if some of them are to be developed from *uparūpakas* and to develop *uparūpakas* from one another among themselves it takes some more time. This means that the development of *uparūpakas* goes back much further, even if we allot a minimum possible time for this process, to the centuries that preceded the Christian era. But none among all the theoretical works that he utilises belongs to the period earlier than the tenth century A.D. None among the *uparūpakas* that he utilises for the

[1] T.S.D., p. 22, and also p. 151, for the table.

same purpose can be assumed to be sufficiently older to support his stand. He generally does not question the variations seen in those later works and, moreover, takes them as indicative of the development of the *uparūpakas*, the origin and evolution of which takes place in B.C. times. Very unconvincingly he explains the silence of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with regard to *nṛtya* or *uparūpakas*, by saying that there was no necessity or occasion for it to discuss and define them.[1] This does not really explain the fact. If there is no necessity for the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to deal with them, what new necessity has arisen in the case of later books which leave out many aspects of drama which the *Nāṭyaśāstra* expounds in such detail? Mankad's conclusion in his book, *The Types of Sanskrit Drama*, cannot be accepted.

ABHINAVA'S VIEWS ON THE MEANING OF ABHINAYA

BEFORE we take up the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for discussion, we might first deal with Abhinava's interpretation. This for two reasons: firstly, because he discusses these matters at length, keeping in view the development of these arts and also the many views prevailing in his time and available to him; the second reason is that it is easy to note to what extent contemporary thought influenced Abhinava to interpret the relevant portions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in a given way. In this place it is enough if his views on *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* alone are noted. Even then, as our intention is not a study of Abhinava with reference to *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*, the whole of his discussion need not be presented here. We shall mention only those points that are helpful in understanding his view on Bharata's verses where *nṛtta* is dealt with and contain some kind of reference to *nṛtya*.

It is easy to understand his classification of *nṛtta* and its significance when some of his basic ideas are clearly understood. In the foregoing pages we have explained the concept of *abhinaya* to some extent. Etymologically, it means 'sending forth' (prefix *abhi*, √*nīñ* and suffix *a* = *abhinaya*). To elaborate, it is the act of sending forth the things towards the persons who are spectators or both spectators and audience. The latter part of this sentence, 'towards spectators', means the consciousness of the spectators. Thus it means the

[1] ibid., p. 102.

performer's (*abhinetṛ*) act, which is intended to send forth the given things towards the consciousness of the persons who are spectators or both spectators and audience, that is, the performer's act of communication. This is the etymological meaning and also the concept of the word *abhinaya* that can be learnt from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.[1]

For unspecified reasons Abhinava does not accept this well-known *abhinaya* in *nṛtta* which, according to the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, is introduced for the first time by Bharata in the *pūrvaraṅga* on the instructions of Śiva. So it is a problem for him to interpret the word *abhinaya* in certain places which are unmistakably connected with *pūrvaraṅga*.[2] In such places i.e. those connected with *nṛtta* of *pūrvaraṅga*, Abhinava interprets it in a different way. He says that here *abhinaya* means the performer's bringing the meaning of the song into his own mind and moving the limbs in accordance with the general trend of the song without the intention of conveying every detail to spectators.[3] It means that it is the performer's physical movement that follows the general trend of (the meaning of) the song owing to his contemplation on it without reference to the meanings of words and sentences of the song, contrary to the *abhinaya* described above which is meant to convey every detail of a song or a composition. Obviously he does all these twists basing on the √*nīñ*=*prāpaṇa*, i.e. to send or to bring to. Thus in his opinion *abhinaya* is of two kinds. Hereafter we too shall mention in this work these two types of *abhinaya* as the first type and the second type of *abhinaya* respectively wherever there is a need to explain Abhinava's point of view.

ABHINAVA'S VIEWS ON THE ORIGIN AND CLASSIFICATION OF NRTTA

ANOTHER important thing that should be noted is that Abhinava accepts or rather finds in Bharata that among *nṛtta*, *gāna* and *vādya*

[1] N.Ś., Vol. II, Ch. 8, pp. 1-2.

[2] ibid., Vol. I, Ch. 4, verse 15, p. 90; verse 283, pp. 187-8, verse 290, p. 191, etc.

[3] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 188, ll. 7-11; p. 177, ll. 9-10; p. 181, ll. 18-19; p. 179, ll. 17-21; p. 189, ll. 18-19. Apart from these, there are other references where the same note can be heard, such as: p. 187, l 11; p. 191, ll. 13-17;

any particular one can be, according to the occasion, a primary thing while the rest become accompaniments or auxiliaries.[1] Since we have noted these three facts — two types of *abhinaya* and the relation among *nṛtta*, *gāna* and *vādya* — on which Abhinava proceeds, we may now see how he classifies *nṛtta:*

Group	Variety	Category
First group	I. *Śuddha-nṛtta*	Former category
	II. *Gītakādyabhinayonmukha-nṛtta*	Latter category
	III. *Gāna-vādya-tālānusāri-nṛtta*	
Second group	IV. *Uddhata-nṛtta*	
	V. *Masṛṇa-nṛtta*	
	VI. *Miśroddhata-nṛtta* or (*Masṛṇamiśritoddhata-nṛtta*) and	
	VII. *Miśramasṛṇa-nṛtta,*[2] or (*Uddhata-miśrita-masṛṇa-nṛtta*)	

If on the basis of the first type of *abhinaya* these seven types of *nṛttas* are to be grouped, the former three varieties fall in one group, while the rest come under another. This is what Abhinava says.[3] (So, accordingly we may hereafter refer to them as the first and the second groups of *nṛttas*.) That is to say, the *nṛtta* varieties of the second group possess the first type of *Abhinaya* i.e. the *abhinaya* which *nāṭya* requires. In other words, these four are *nṛtya* in type, *nṛtya*, being a name which came into vogue after Bharata. According to Abhinava, Śiva himself is responsible for these four varieties too.[4]

p. 195, ll. 24-5; etc. Some remarks of his, for instance that seen in p. 198, ll. 10-12, should be understood in this way, otherwise they invariably mislead

[1] ibid. p. 167, l. 21 and p. 168, ll. 1-22; The same view is expressed in other places too: p. 188, l. 20 et seq.; p. 172, ll. 6-7.

[2] ibid. p. 184, ll. 9-17; (also *see* p. 182, ll. 15-25; for the clarification of the second group of *nṛttas*). Here it should be carefully noted that the word '*tataḥ*' used in the passage referred above, at the beginning of every variety from the second variety onwards, refers to the order in his own counting and nothing more, i.e. it does not refer to the evolution of the later variety from the immediately preceeding one, because he verbally denies such a meaning by saying just before this enumeration that *eva midaṃ nṛttaṃ saptakṛtiprakāraiḥ bhagavata* [Śiva] *eva prasṛtam.*

[3] ibid. p. 181, ll. 26-8.

[4] ibid. p. 182, ll, 4-14.

These types acquired the names *masṛṇa*, *uddhata*, etc., owing to the fact that *nṛtta* is utilised to perform the compositions which express the feelings which have either the soft or the bright quality. To explain it simply, if *nṛtta* is utilised to perform such a composition which expresses the soft type of feeling, then *nṛtta* gets the name *masṛṇa*, if it is vice versa, then *nṛtta* receives the appellation *uddhata* and so on.[1] If we are to refer to *masṛṇa* or *sukumāra* and *uddhata* in the terminology which is more familiar to us, they are the *lāsya* and the *tāṇḍava* respectively. So much for the explanation of the principle that goes to make the second group of *nṛttas*.

From this it is clear that the first group of three *nṛttas* has no first type of the *abhinaya*. But, as its very name implies, the second variety of the first group has the second type of *abhinaya* (which, as we have already explained, is a different one from that of *nāṭya*). Now, if we come to the third variety of *nṛtta* we find that Abhinava does not specifically mention anything about the question whether or not this variety possesses *abhinaya* of some kind or the other. But certain usages, (especially '*bhrūtārāparispanda*', and others of its description, referred to on p. 17, footnote 2) lead us to assume that in his opinion this variety also possesses the second type of *abhinaya*, as the second variety does. If this assumption is correct, then the three *nṛttas* of the first group can be again classified into two categories—those having no *abhinaya* of any kind and those having the second type of *abhinaya*. This is to say, the first variety of *nṛtta* comes under the former category while the second and the third varieties of *nṛttas* come under the latter category.

The significance of each variety of this seven-fold classification of *nṛtta* may now, schematically, be put as follows:

1. *Śuddha-nṛtta* is of *aṅgahāras* and *recakas* or it is the one consisting of *aṅgahāras* and *recakas*.

2. *Gītakādyabhinayonmukha-nṛtta* is the one consisting of the physical movement guided by the song without the reference to the detail contained in it, but with reference to the general trend of the meaning owing to the performer's contemplation of it. In other words, it is the *nṛtta* that possesses our second type of *abhinaya*.

[1] ibid. p. 184, ll. 16-17.

3. *Gānavādyatālānusāri-nṛtta* is almost the same as the above, which means that it also has the second type of *abhinaya*. But the difference between them is this: in the case of the former it is the leading factor while *gīta* accompanies it, that is, *gīta* works as an auxiliary, whereas in the case of this third variety, it accompanies (or it works as an auxiliary to) either *gīta* or *vādya* or else to both, while these are leading factors.

4. *Uddhata-nṛtta* is the one which has *abhinaya* of the first type i.e. *abhinaya* of *nāṭya* and which is used to perform the composition expressing the bright type of feeling or, to put it more precisely, the *rasas*, namely *roudra*, *vīra* and so on.

5. *Masṛṇa-nṛtta* is the same as the above with the exception that it is used to perform the composition expressing the soft type of feeling or, to put it precisely the *rasas*, namely *śṛṅgāra*, *karuṇa* and so on.

6. *Miśroddhata-nṛtta* (or *Masṛṇamiśritoddhata-nṛtta*) is, in the main, the same as the *uddhata* variety, still it is not so pure as *uddhata*,but mixed with some element of *masṛṇa*.

7. *Miśramasṛṇa-nṛtta* (or *Uddhatamiśrita-masṛṇa-nṛtta*) is, in the main, the same as the *masṛṇa* variety. However it is not so pure as *masṛṇa*, but mixed with some element of *uddhata*.

This is Abhinava's classification and explanation of *nṛtta*. So, Mankad has been mistaken not only while explaining these seven varieties but also in concluding that the first variety of the seven on the one hand and the second and third on the other, are 'the same as *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*;' (of later ages, i.e. medieval concept). Further, he erroneously says that this evolutionary distinction (i.e. as Mankad himself tries to establish) is noticed by Abhinava also.[1] This is pure conjecture and need not detain us further.

As we have seen before, Abhinava does not accept that the three varieties of the first group could have *abhinaya* of the sort which *nāṭya* requires. None of the three of the former group, therefore, can be equalled with *nṛtya*. The real *nṛtya* varieties, as already mentioned, are the four varieties of the second group. He never admits the second group of the *nṛttas* to be used in the *pūrvaraṅga* and he is very careful to mend or twist some usages of Bharata in order to say that the three *nṛttas* of the former group only can be used

[1] *See* T.S.D., p. 16.

in the *pūrvaraṅga.* Also he never admits of any kind of evolution among these seven varieties. As we have mentioned before he thinks of Śiva himself being responsible for the creation of all these seven, saying *evamidaṃ nṛttaṃ saptakṛtiprakārair bhagavata eva prasṛtam.*[1] Amazingly enough, he also thinks of Bharata as the person responsible for the recording of all these seven types. This can be deduced from the way of his commenting upon different verses and also from some of his remarks.[2] In his opinion, Bharata expounds these four varieties in four lines beginning with *devena cāpi* and ending with *śṛṅgārarasa-sambhavaḥ.*[3]

As it has been already mentioned, the last four varieties of *nṛttas* are unmistakably *nṛtya* types. It would be fantastic even to imagine that the medieval designation of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* is unknown to Abhinava who lived in the same epoch in which Dhanañjaya and Dhanika did. If so, why does he not use that terminology of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* to name the varieties of *nṛttas* of the above two groups respectively, especially when he admits the important difference that existed between them? No definite answer to this question exists in his writing, but it may not be impossible to get some, if verbal proof itself is not demanded. Although in the present text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* the word *nṛtya* is seen in some places, yet that cannot be taken as reliable. And it looks reasonably certain that *nṛtta* alone is used by Bharata. So it can be assumed that for some reason or the other the word *nṛtya* was introduced into the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in later times when it became quite popular. Whatever the case may be, Abhinava adheres to the reading *nṛtta* throughout his commentary. This may be the reason why Abhinava never uses the word *nṛtya* to call the four *nṛttas* of the second group, although they are unmistakably *nṛtya* varieties. This seems quite plausible when the opinions of some of the earlier commentators are taken into consideration. Abhinava at the end of the fourth chapter quotes, probably verbatim, at least in a few cases, some older views about the question whether or not *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* are identical.[4] All those commentators keep in mind

[1] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 184.
[2] ibid. p. 182, ll. 24-5.
[3] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, pp. 181-2.
[4] A.B., Vol. I, pp. 207-8.

nṛtya and express their opinion on this point according to their views. But none of them uses the word *nṛtya*. Why is this? Here too, at present there is no more convincing explanation other than what we have offered above. A conclusion may, tentatively, be drawn that not only Abhinava, but also others, whose works are closely connected with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, i.e. whose works are really commentaries or the like, do not use the word *nṛtya*, adhering to the usage of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (i.e. because of its absence in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*), and use according to the necessity *nṛtta* alone to mean both *nṛtta* as well as *nṛtya*. This conclusion does not, however, imply that all these older authors think of Śiva alone as responsible for *nṛtya* too and Bharata is the person to write about these two arts as Abhinava does. In the absence of their complete works, we do not know what views they may have held on these and other issues.

Perhaps for the reason mentioned above Abhinava never uses the word *nṛtya*, however definitely he may accept that particular art. There is room for discussion of his views on these four types and the compositions that fall under these types. Apart from these, his remarks on some compositions like *ḍombikā* are too complex in nature. It is useless to enter into these details which will hardly help us in our present endeavour. Another important point here is that even though he too, like Dhanika and others, uses here and there the words *padārtha* and *vākyārtha*, it is not for the same purpose. Nowhere does he say anything that confines the four *nṛttas* of the second group, i.e. which are *nṛtya* types to express *bhāvas* alone. He never designates them to be *padārthābhinayātmaka*, which is significant.

So far as the word *aṅgavikṣepa* goes he too uses it several times in different contexts.[1] Notwithstanding such usages he does not mean what most of the other medieval theorists do. As is clear from one of his observations, he imparts the meaning of *aṅgahāra* to it. That is why he says, as mentioned earlier, *vilāsena kṣepaḥ* = *vikṣepaḥ*. There is no reason to suppose that he equally prefers it. He uses this also, perhaps it was prevalent in his times, but he certainly gives it a refined meaning keeping in mind the significance of

[1] ibid pp. 21, 174, 176, etc.

aṅgahāra (which will be explained by us later). Thus, we may presume, he differs to some extent from the people of his own time. This is all that we need to know for the present about Abhinava's view regarding the most important points.

It is a habit with some modern scholars to ascribe everything found in his commentary to Abhinava's credit. But the facts are otherwise. Even what he says about the second type of *abhinaya* is not his own. The idea is fully found in his teacher Bhaṭṭatota's opinion.[1] Similarly many other items also go to the earlier commentators. He knows what most of his predecessors have got to say on these and allied subjects, which is not a discredit of course. Moreover, he utilises much of it in a masterly way. This is the case with our present subject too. Even if there is at all something to be denied in these matters he says in the present topic, that will be very little indeed, when we take the whole development that takes place in the period beginning from the Bharata down to his own time. But like most of the ancient writers, he too inherits the habit of attributing everything to a single authority. Abhinava also traces the origin of *nṛtya* to Śiva and presumes Bharata as the writer on it. In fact this is not the case, or at least the authority of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* on which he bases and comments is too slender for such a theory. This obviously does not mean that everything that he says is untrue. What he says is true as well as useful when the whole development of *nṛtya* is to be dealt with. But all that he says about the origin of *nṛtya* is untrue and unacceptable. As the development of *nṛtya* is not of our present concern, we may now approach the *Nāṭyaśāstra* independent of Abhinava's interpretations to know something of all the three arts.

THE ORIGIN OF NRTTA

TRADITIONALLY it is accepted that Śiva is responsible for the creation of *nṛtta* and also that he is the first performer of this art. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* accepts the fact, as is proved from the beginning of its fourth chapter and many other scattered references. In this connection one may recall some archaeological evidences found in the ancient city of Mohenjodaro, such as the statuette of a *danseuse*

[1] ibid. p. 207.

and the seal bearing the figure identified by experts to be Paśupati or Śiva.[1] As the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the earliest extant work on these subjects, admits of Śiva's intimate connection with *nṛtta*, one may connect this fact with the archaeological evidences and conclude that *nṛtta* has been practised in India at least for five thousand years. There cannot be any doubt at all about the fact that the practice of *nṛtta* goes back to a very remote age. Nevertheless, there is no sound evidence to prove that the *nṛtta* supposed to have existed in the times of Mohenjodaro is the same *nṛtta* that is expounded in the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The evidences for the mere existence of a kind of dance will not do when the problems are to be tackled on the basis of concepts. The seal bearing Śiva cannot be taken as a sound evidence to prove a serious point that is needed now. Some scenes of *nṛtta* seen in relief panels of Barhut, Sāṇchi, Amarāvatī, Udayagiri,[2] and so on, are unmistakable evidences that prove the existence of the tradition of *nṛtta* that is expounded by Bharata, even the Barhut specimen, the earliest among these, is too late an example to prove the antiquity of this *nṛtta*. If so, no sound evidences are available to trace the beginnings of the *nṛtta* of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* in fact. If the perfection reached at the stage which Bharata records is taken into consideration, this much can be definitely said that its origin goes far back, because such a perfection cannot imaginably be reached within a short time.

THE ORIGIN OF NATYA

So far as *nāṭya* is concerned there are several theories about its origin.[3] They need not be repeated here, since they are not based on sound proofs, i.e. they are too speculative and not helpful. But one among them may be briefly mentioned now. Pāṇini mentions two works of *Naṭa-sūtras* — one by *Śilāli* and the other by

[1] A.A.I., Plates 3 and 4, A and C.

[2] Bht., Book No. III, Plates XLII, (39) and XXII, (17 b), *see* also Plate XXXIX (34) for the singled out panel of the latter.
M.S., Vol. II, Plate XVIII, b, lower panel.
M.G., Plates X, B; XI, A; and XIV, C.
A.S., Plate XLIII, a.

[3] For details *see* S.D., p. 1 et seq.

Kṛśāśva.[1] Scholars differ with regard to the meaning of *naṭa* mentioned by Pāṇini. Some say that the √*naṭa* being a prākṛtised form of the Sanskrit √*nṛt*, does not mean the actor, but the dancer, so the *Naṭa-sūtras* mentioned by Pāṇini are manuals or hand-books on dance and not on dramatic art. The other group of scholars says that these are works on dramatic art, but they do not seem to be in a position to prove their view concretely, so also in the matter of proving the existence of a full-fledged dramatic art before the Christian era. Whatever may be the differences among them in interpreting the root words, in the matter of proving the early existence of dramatic art the scholars fail to do justice to the theory of *nāṭya*.

In an unpublished work entitled *Problems Connected with Some Technical Terms Used by Bharata*, we have tried to trace the chronology of dramaturgic works on the basis of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Our study leads us to trace three works before Bharata — (i) a *Sūtra* work on *nāṭya*; (ii) a *Bhāṣya* on it, and (iii) *Ānuvaṃśya* verses occupying the place of *vārtikas* and quoted by Bharata here and there in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (which thus becomes the fourth in the chronological order). But in the absence of sound proof in determining the dates of all these three works mentioned by Bharata difficulties persist. In the circumstances, if we base on the nature of these three works, or if we permit ourselves a theory, we may assume that two centuries of time elapse between each pair of these works (i.e. *Sūtra* and *Bhāṣya*, *Bhāṣya* and *Ānuvaṃśya* verses, and *Ānuvaṃśya* verses and the *Nāṭyaśāstra*). If so, the *Sūtra* work mentioned by Bharata precedes the *Nāṭyaśāstra* by six centuries. Further, there is the difficulty in fixing a definite date to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. Until now no date could be finally assigned to it. It is the general contention that the text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as available today was not written at one time, in its present form it embodies additions and alterations. Nowadays there is, however, a general agreement among the scholars in regard to its date. It is thought that its beginnings belong to the second or the third century A.D., while no additions are made later than the fifth century A.D. But no one has tried to point out which portions are the additions, except to suggest some vague theories that the

[1] A., 4-3-110 and 111.

portion dealing with music is a later addition.[1] There is no doubt about the fact that there are some additions in it. But the assumption of some scholars, like S. K. De, that the portion dealing with music is a later addition is not based on solid grounds. In fact, it is quite one of the earliest portions of the text because it falls, as mentioned in the *saṅgraha* repertorium, or in the table of contents, within the scope of the original plan of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. We have suggested in our work referred to earlier, that the portion from the *sāmānyābhinaya* chapter to the beginning of the chapter on *siddhi* and secondly the portion beginning after the chapter on *avanaddha* to the end of the present text, are the later additions. Apart from these portions there are also some small sections which may be suspected to be later additions. Whatever may be our differences regarding the additions, unless we can decide upon the original text, at least with some degree of confidence, no date can be finally fixed. Similarly, it is to be seen whether or not words like *Śaka*, *Bāhlīka*, etc., to which our scholars attach such importance, come under the original portions. So, to fix the date of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is not a simple matter. Whether or not the *Nāṭyaśāstra* goes back earlier than the second century A.D. none can say with certainty. For the present, the second century A.D. may be tentatively accepted as its possible date of composition. Then the *Sūtra* work mentioned by Bharata may go back to the fourth century B.C., which is assumed to be Pāṇini's date. We do not find any meaning in arguing that in Pāṇini's age the actor is not meant by the word *naṭa* and that *Naṭasūtras* mentioned by Pāṇini are not the works on *nāṭya* or dramaturgic art. On the contrary, it can be definitely said that the *Naṭasūtras* mentioned by him are works on dramaturgy. But at the present time it is not possible to decide whether the *Sūtra* work known to Bharata is identical with one of the two mentioned by Pāṇini.

While defining *saṅgraha* (repertorium or table of contents) Bharata specifies that it is necessary that the things to be included in *saṅgraha* must be those which are dealt with in the *Sūtra* work and *Bhāṣya*. From this it is quite clear that most of the subjects which he deals with in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* are already expounded in the *Sūtra* work mentioned by him. It is, then, the plain conclusion that a comprehensive

[1] H.S.P., Vol. I, p. 32 et seq.

theory on *nāṭya* existed four centuries before the Christian era. If these were the conditions then, it is impossible to state that dramatic art is not in a fully developed stage and flourishing condition. But, it is true that no specimen of dramatic composition, even by name, of these early days are known to us. The earliest specimens that we know today, though fragmentarily, are of Aśvaghoṣa, a well-known poet and Buddhist philosopher of the first century A.D. Nevertheless, the evidence for such a practice is not lacking.

Patañjali belongs to the second century B.C. and he mentions the word *naṭa* several times. All such usages can be taken to be proofs of the existence of *nāṭya*. One among them decides the question beyond any doubt. In a discussion he utilises *naṭa-bhāryās* as an analogy, where he says that whoever may ask the wives of *naṭas* when they enter the stage 'Whose are you', they reply 'We belong to you, you the very person' —('*vyañjanāni punar naṭa-bhāryāvad bhavanti tadyathā naṭānāṃ striyo raṅgagatā yo yaḥ pṛcchati kasya yūyaṃ kasya yūyaṃ iti taṃ taṃ tava tavaivetyāhuḥ*'[1]). This positively proves not only the practice of *nāṭya* at that time but also the existence of whole families who take to acting as a profession.

So it can be deduced that a fully developed theory and practice of *nāṭya* is to be found in the fourth century before the Christian era. There is no positive or known proof to decide the conditions prevailing beyond this age. In the circumstances one may try to guess something, working only on the assumption 'what it might have been'. But this 'what it might have been' will vary according to the preference or approach or sometimes on the inclination of the individual, as was the case with the early generation of the modern scholars. So this 'what it might have been' may prove good as an ideal in one's own times, but it cannot be decisive in dealing with facts that occurred in the remote past. This again brings us back to the point that to discuss something about the origin and nature of these arts there is no other means than the concepts themselves. Such concepts are traceable, as we have shown, from the fourth century B.C., even if these are not available directly from the works of that age. These are available through the *Nāṭya-śāstra*, as is clear from the *saṅgraha* of Bharata, that is to say that we can depend upon the *Nāṭyaśāstra* for the concepts, and that whatever

[1] *See* M.B., (on sūtra 6-1-2), p. 530.

important concepts are noted in it can be assumed as continuing the ones from the fourth century B.C. or slightly earlier times.

In the first few chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* an episode regarding some questions of *nāṭya*, for example its birth and so on, is recorded. This episode too, like many others, has suffered much from unscientific and inappropriate interpretations. For, through the mythological veil, it certainly refers to some historical facts; it may be useful to present it here.

Once upon a time when *Jambūdvīpa* was occupied by various kinds of peoples like *devas*, *dānavas*, *gāndharvas*, *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, *nāgas* (*mahoraga*), and so on, and when the world became miserable because of all sorts of evil passions and began to behave rustically, the gods approached Brahma and requested him for a playful thing (*krīḍanīyaka*) which should be both spectacle (*dṛśya*) and audible (*śravya*) and which should be accessible to all. If it would be such, then, everybody may realise through that what is righteous and what is wrong, and what is good and what is bad, and what ought be done and what ought not be done and so on. Brahma considered this request. At that time his intention was to create such a thing which would be able to yield virtue, wealth, fame, which would be instructive and protective (*sasaṅgraha*); which would be to the future generations a revelation of all sorts of activity, which would contain a theme (*setihāsam*); which would be inclusive of the conclusions of all the sciences and also, inclusive of all kinds of arts. With this intention he contemplated on the four *Vedas* and was impressed with the respective features that characterise them, such as the literary aspect of *Ṛgveda*, the aspect of action of *Yajurveda*, the musical aspect of *Sāmaveda* and lastly the aspect of *Rasa* of *Atharvaveda*. Then, with the ideas and clues thus derived, he created the thing named *nāṭya*, dramatic art, out of the four following things—*pāṭhya*, to be uttered (i.e. verbal or literary composition); *abhinaya*, act of communication; *gāna*, song; and *rasa*, bliss, —as its four constituents. After its creation Brahma asked Indra, lord of gods, to make the gods adopt and perform it; and then the latter humbly answered that the gods were not worthy for this purpose, since they were unable to grasp or to remember and also to perform it. The sages who were restrained and well versed in the secrets of the *Vedas* could grasp, hold and perform it. Brahma, hearing this, asked

Bharata to become a performer of *nāṭya* along with his sons. And Bharata learnt it from Brahma and taught his sons. Then he informed Brahma of this and asked what he had to do further. In reply to this, Brahma told him that the date of the festival of *dhvaja* (flag) was nearing and he should perform this at that time, which would be a fit occasion. Accordingly a *Samavakāra*, (one of the ten varieties of plays expounded in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*), by name *Amṛta-manthana*, was staged. Thus runs this episode with many more details which need not be mentioned here, except for the following one.

After some time had passed Brahma again told Bharata that he was desirous of showing his new creation to Śiva in order to seek his opinion about it. Mentioning thus he asked Bharata to prepare along with his sons for this purpose. Then Brahma with Bharata and his troupe went to Himālaya, the abode of Śiva, and requested Śiva to do him a favour by witnessing and hearing his new creation. Śiva agreed and a *Dima* (another variety of ten plays) named *Tripuradāha* was staged in addition to the *Samavakāra* namely *Amṛtamanthana*. All the *Bhūtagaṇas*, followers of Śiva, who saw the performances, much enjoyed them and Śiva the pioneer in the creation and performance of *nṛtta*, dance, was greatly impressed by this and glad too, so that he told Brahma of his willingness to give his art i.e. *nṛtta* and suggested that he should add it to *pūrvaraṅga*, the preliminaries of *nāṭya* in order to make it vivid (*citra*). Brahma said to him, 'Please do give it to us'. Śiva, then, called Taṇḍu, his chief follower, and ordered him to teach (*ācakṣva*, lit. tell) the *aṅgahāras* or *nṛtta* to Bharata. So he did this and Bharata used it accordingly.

This episode does not support several current views about the nature, origin and the development of *nāṭya*. Some scholars are of the opinion that the Indian drama is an opera type. This view is based on a misunderstanding of certain instructions given for the use of some accompaniments, for example, music, or a misunderstanding about the relation between drama proper and its accessories. To describe the nature of Indian drama is in itself a complicated and difficult task and it cannot be done here except in passing. In regard to the development of *nāṭya* or rather the development of plays, there is a view, as once already mentioned,

that the first play to exist is *bhāṇa*, from which others gradually evolved. But according to this episode we notice that the first to be created is *samavakāra* while the next is *ḍima*, however these are not mentioned here as representing the stages of the evolution. Further, according to the theory of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the principal factor for the division of the plays is the *vṛtti*, unlike the later theory which completely ignores the *vṛtti* and mentions in its place themes and other things. Till now neither *vṛtti* nor the difference of plays on its basis has been properly studied. That is a task for the future. Until this work is satisfactorily done nothing can be concluded definitely. Therefore the view that considers *bhāṇa* to be the first play cannot be taken for granted.

So far as the origin of *nāṭya* goes, the above episode clearly points out that *nāṭya* does not originate in religion and is not meant to serve religious purposes, however much it may take the names of the gods including Brahma, Śiva, and so on. Utterly destructive conditions brought it forth. It is meant to save the world from the evils through correctly focusing light on everything. Even its connection with *dhvajamaha* does not prove its relation with religion. *Nāṭya* is not created in view of *dhvajamaha*, the latter is just an occasion for its first performance, that is to say its connection with *dhvajamaha* is accidental rather than essential and purposeful. Its origin and purpose too is secular and not religious. Secondly, we do not notice in this episode that *nāṭya* has any connection with either *nṛtta* or even *nṛtya* before its creation. On the contrary, we see quite clearly that *nṛtta* came into contact with it much later. Therefore it would be wrong to think of its origin in *nṛtta* and it would be more wrong to do so in *nṛtya*, since such a thing is not mentioned or rather does not exist at all before *nāṭya*.

Hence the conclusion is that the arts of *nṛtta* and *nāṭya* are of independent origin, though the former is obviously older than the latter. This goes very well with Abhinava's view on Bharata's salutation at the very beginning of the text, '*praṇamya śirasā devau pitāmaha-maheśvarau*'. There he says that Brahma and Śiva are offered salutation, because they are the *formateurs*, responsible for the first creation (*upajñā*) of *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* respectively. Since their creation up to the present day they have never merged into each other and moreover run parallel in ways peculiar to them, in

spite of some effects born out of their later contact. So far as the date of the origin of *nāṭya* goes, as in the case of *nṛtta*, nothing definite can be said now. But, as has been mentioned earlier, it may be said that in the fourth century B.C. *nāṭya* existed as a well developed art.

THE ORIGIN OF NRTYA

FROM where does *nṛtya* come and how? These are the questions we should now study. In the preceding legendary episode there is no mention of it. Even in the whole text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* this word is never used. This can be taken for granted in spite of the fact that there are some readings of *nṛtya* in the fourth chapter of it. As already pointed out, in the absence of a motive to give a name to a type of art as *nṛtya*, we can, without hesitation, take those readings as later interpolations or that might have crept into it by carelessness on the part of readers and scribes. This obviously leads one to presume that *nṛtya* is not known to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as an older art, that is to say that there exists no such art before the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but it does not mean that such an art may not have been created in the epoch of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

In fact, as is clear from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, such an art came into existence in the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. We have already noted in the legendary episode that Śiva expressed his willingness to give his art, *nṛtta*, to Brahma. In this connection Śiva suggested to Brahma the way in which to utilise *nṛtta* in *nāṭya* if it is learnt from him. He says: '*mahāgīteṣu caivārthān samyagevābhineṣyasi*'.[1] In its context it means: you can very well communicate (*abhineṣyasi*) with it (*nṛtta*) the things (*artha*) out of which the songs are composed, the songs that are sung in the *pūrvaraṅga*, preliminaries of the *nāṭya*. Thus Śiva suggested how to use his art in the *nāṭya*. Śiva's *nṛtta* is known to be devoid of *abhinaya*. It is quite obvious from the nature of it, or from the description of *karaṇas* and *aṅgahāras* out of which *nṛtta* is made and also from the question raised in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* about the purpose of *nṛtta*. But Śiva said that one can communicate things with it. Then how is it possible for him to have said this? Here it seems, or we are to assume, that after noticing

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 90.

abhinaya in the performance of *nāṭya*, the *abhinaya* which is entirely new to him, an idea might have come into his mind that *abhinaya* can be introduced into his art, *nṛtta*, and things communicated. To explain it further, if his art is performed with a given intention and order, then the things may be conveyed with his art as well. It is quite natural to strike new ideas when a thing is perceived newly. If the same happened with Śiva, there should not be any wonder. So, if the present situation is explained in this way, it will not be without sequence. Thus here lies the seed of *nṛtya*. What Śiva did here was just to give the hint. Then who is it that actually worked out the details of combining *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* in such a way that with *nṛtta* also things may be conveyed without causing much loss to its character? As the performer of *nāṭya* was Bharata and as he was the person to whom Śiva ordered Taṇḍu to teach *nṛtta*, no person other than Bharata was there, or need be supposed, for the working out of such details.

We have already noticed that Abhinava takes a different stand while interpreting the sentences or the usages like the above quoted ones without any convincing reasons. So what he says on this need not be repeated. Also, if his interpretation is taken to be correct, the development that took place in the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* disappears from our knowledge, hence his view cannot be accepted. We are to proceed on different lines, so in this investigation we need not at this point consider his opinion in detail. The fantastic meaning he gives to the word *abhinaya* in some places will hardly hold good. Therefore, in this place by *abhinaya* we are to understand the same as Bharata meant by his definition, i.e. here *abhinaya* means nothing but the act of communication. If so, the proper conclusion, to repeat it, is that just on the hint of Śiva, Bharata worked out the details of combining *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* which lead to the birth of a new art, i.e. *nṛtya*.

The fact that the combination of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* resulted in the creation of a new art is further supported by two verses quoted by Abhinava in Kohala's name whom tradition acknowledges as an unquestionable authority second only to Bharata. So far as our knowledge goes, these verses escaped the notice of the modern scholars, including D.R. Mankad. Though Kohala's name is met with frequently in the works on dance, drama and music, no genuine

work of his is yet available and whatever works are available in his name, those are, in the opinion of modern scholars, much later works. Whether or not it is the same also with these verses quoted by Abhinava we cannot say. But on the authority of Abhinava they may be taken as genuine. In reality even if these verses are not by Kohala they are likely to be quite early ones, for Abhinava quotes them. Therefore there would not be any doubt about the fact that they throw considerable light on the subject in question. These two verses run as follows :

> *'sandhyāyāṃ nṛtyataḥ śambhoḥ bhaktyāgre nāradaḥ purā*
> *gāavān tripuronmāthaṃ taccittastvatha gītake*
> *cakārābhinayaṃ prītas tataḥ taṇḍuṃ ca so'bravīt*
> *nāṭyoktābhinayenedaṃ vatsa yojaya tāṇḍavam*[1]'.

What these mean is this: in the past time in front of Śiva, while he was dancing in the evening (*sandhyā*, twilight) Nārada sung with devotion a song having the subject of his (Śiva's) victory over a demon called Tripura, and Śiva getting the mind identified with the meaning of that song and becoming joyful, does the *abhinaya* (i.e. enacted it or communicated its meaning with dance); and afterwards he told Taṇḍu to combine (*yojaya*, add) the *tāṇḍava* (i.e. *nṛtta*) with the *abhinaya* used in *nāṭya*.

These verses tell us frankly that *nṛtta* precedes *nāṭya* in point of time and later on when *nāṭya* comes into existence, *abhinaya* is added to *nṛtta*, taking the idea from *nāṭya*. Another quite significant thing is that these verses are connected with Kohala. Thus from internal and external evidences we come to know that *abhinaya* is added to *nṛtta*. Still there is some difference in regard to the creator of the new art, *nṛtya*, that is, between the conclusion we have reached at from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and the one drawn from these two verses.

According to the *Nāṭyaśāstra* Bharata himself is responsible for the creation of the new art, though he has received a hint from Śiva about it. And in accordance with these verses Śiva, by himself

[1] A.B., Vol. I, p. 182.
'*agre*' and '*nāṭyokta*' are amendments for the readings '*adrau*' and *nāṭyoktya* which are available in print. The former may be retained and explained as it is, but the latter is certainly incorrect.

once doing this, orders Taṇḍu to canonise or systematise it, thus Śiva is responsible for this new art. Surely guided by these verses Abhinava comments on the verses of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, such as '*devena*' and so on. Apart from this he might have been led by this also while commenting on other verses. Now we cannot sacrifice what we get from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to what we see in these later verses, because a motive can easily be noticed in these two verses to insist on the godly origin of the new art. The result caused by this motive continues throughout the ages that followed. It does not seem to lose its hold even today if we notice the endeavour of some modern scholars to prove that the quite later and insignificant work like *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, has a great antiquity, at least with regard to its content, because it is propagated to be Nandikeśvara's (Taṇḍu) work. Leaving aside these questions, if we come to the point we can rely better on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which is the earliest extant work. Moreover, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* seems to give more reliable or accurate information in which a natural sequence of things is present. In Kohala's verses also there is an endeavour to show some sequence of things, yet it seems to depend on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. All this leads us to take the account given in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as being the more authentic. In that case Bharata himself is responsible for the creation of this new art, *nṛtya*. In spite of the difference pointed out in Kohala's verses, if we look into the problem in the light of Kohala's traditionally known dependence on Bharata, our conclusion seems proper and plausible.

Although Bharata is responsible for the birth of *nṛtya*, yet it develops to full extent only after him. This can be said on the basis of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, which has no separate treatment of *nṛtya* in it. This is quite plausible as well as natural, because *nṛtya* is as yet in the initial stage. This point is further proved by the absence of a separate name for it. This shows that such a necessity had not been felt at the time, this, again, because of its initial stage. There is no definite evidence available to show after what period of time this new art gained a separate name of its own i.e. *nṛtya*. We have seen that Bharata also called it *nṛtta* and his commentators or rather most of his commentators too do so even up to the tenth century A.D. This does not however mean that the name *nṛtya* was given to it only after the tenth century A.D.

Amarasiṃha, who is known as the first lexicographer of Sanskrit, notes the word *nṛtya* in the technical sense. Although the √*nṛt* is frequently used in its several tenses in the older literature, yet it cannot refer to anything but *nṛtta*. Amarasiṃha's familiarity with the technical terms of *nāṭya*, *nṛtya nṛtta*, *gāndharva*, and so on is self-evident. Relying on his statement '*tāṇḍavaṃ naṭanaṃ nāṭyaṃ lāsyaṃ nṛtyaṃ ca nartane*' [1] it can be said that this new art gained its name *nṛtya*, before Amarasiṃha and became popular to the extent that a lexicographer could not avoid including it in his work, *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana*, popularly known as *Amarakośa*. This is to say that by the fifth century A.D. this new art was quite popular, with its own or a separate name, *nṛtya*. But as to when it got its name no definite date can be mentioned at present.

It is needless to say that in the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* when it was not so much as given a name of its own, there was also no division or classification of *nṛtya* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. Although the word *lāsya* is seen in the present text, as for example in the compound word *lāsyāṅga*, yet it does not refer to the variety of either *nṛtta* or *nṛtya*. Similarly the word *tāṇḍava* also is found, but this too does not refer to the variety of either *nṛtta* or *nṛtya*. *Lāsya* is not at all used in connection with *nṛtta*, whereas *tāṇḍava* is. The variety of *nṛtta* which we today call *tāṇḍavanṛtta* is however not meant by this word. On the basis of some statements, particularly noted in a couple of verses, if at all such verses are not proved by further researches to be later interpolations, we may say that *tāṇḍava* means, so far as the *Nāṭyaśāstra* goes, nothing but *nṛtta*[2]. *Nṛtta*, according to the particular verses, is also called *tāṇḍava*, for the simple reason that Taṇḍu canonises it, as its etymology, also mentioned by Abhinava, says that '*taṇḍo rayaṃ tāṇḍavaḥ*' (of Taṇḍu). We have seen that *tāṇḍava* is a synonym to *nṛtta*, so that there exists no classification of *nṛtta*, as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, but this does not mean that there exists no variety in this art. This really means that no such classification is to be found in theory. Varieties in the art existed probably even before the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, because these varieties

[1] A.K., *kāṇḍa* I, *Nāṭyavarga*, Sl. 10. (Vol. I, p. 141). The commentators and editors (of modern times) sometimes suggest the reading *nṛtta* in the place of *nṛtya*. This suggestion does not seem to be based on serious grounds.

[2] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, verses 266–8, pp. 171–2.

are based on the broad classification of *rasa*, rather on the basis of its qualities — *citta-dravībhāva* and *dīpti*.[1]

It will be worth while to inquire whether in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* we have such a classification and *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* are to be found there in a different guise. In a few places the word *sukumāraprayoga* occurs, which obviously meant what we understand now by *lāsya*, while so far as *tāṇḍava* is concerned it is not replaced by any other word, but at the same time it is not much used along with *lāsya* except for once or twice. In spite of Abhinava's interpretation of *tāṇḍava* as *uddhata* (vigorous), if we base ourselves on the original text, it does not appear to be used in the sense of *uddhata*. On the contrary, as has been said above, it means only *nṛtta*. Whatever may be the case with *tāṇḍava*, here *sukumāra*, if taken to be reliable, appears to be an obvious usage for the later concept of *lāsya*.

As an introduction to the topic of *piṇḍībandhas* Bharata notes that the followers of Śiva, like Nandi (Taṇḍu) Bhadramukha, and so on made the *piṇḍībandhas* after witnessing the dance of Śiva which followed the spoliation of the *Dakṣayajña*, the dance accompanied by drums.[2] Immediately before this there is a verse which both from the point of grammar and meaning does not fit in with this introduction. Moreover it is a kind of repetition. This verse says that the *piṇḍībandhas* were made after the dance of Śiva with *recakas* and *aṅgahāras* and also of Pārvatī who was dancing with delicate gestures i.e. delicate *recakas* and *aṅgahāras*. Apart from other inadequacies, the most absurd thing in this is the mention of the presence of Pārvatī immediatly after the destruction of *Dakṣayajña*. Further, this verse does not have grammatically any connection with either its preceding or succeeding verses. It is quite apparent, when we look at it in the context in which it is found, that it is some kind of violent and inappropriate insertion. So it may be inferred that in later times, when this classification came into existence and was generally accepted, some people might have tried to incorporate it here in order to show Bharata himself as an authority for this classification of *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. Such motives are at work in other periods also. Witness, for instance, Abhinava's

[1] This matter will be discussed in the pages following.

[2] N.S., Vol. I, Ch. 4, Sls. 258-60, p. 167.

rejection of reading '*dṛṣṭo' mayā*' in the place of '*dṛṣṭo mayā*' in the first chapter itself.[1]

There is another place where the same usage, *sukumāra-prayoga*, is found.[2] On the basis of this Abhinava says that the four kinds of *nṛttas* (in the present sense *nṛtyas* as explained by us earlier) are expounded by Bharata. With his scholarly gift for twisting things according to convenience, what he says on this is fantastic and it is impossible to accept him. This usage too, like the previous one, and for the same reasons, appears to be an interpolation.

For the present we cannot put this forward as a theory, but we may mention by way of suggestion for further investigation a point that not only these two or three verses but also all the verses of a long portion of the fourth chapter, — the portion which begins from this place (i.e. sl. 274) and ends with the chapter, — seem to be interpolated. The subject mainly dealt with in this portion is how the *nṛtta*, with and without its newly acquired *abhinaya*, should be used in *pūrvaraṅga* by the *naṭī* and her women companions. There is no sufficient ground why such a method should be described in this place rather than in its proper context i.e. the chapter devoted to *pūrvaraṅga*. There are in it a considerable number of verbal repetitions of topics belonging to the later chapters. Abhinava admits this and also gives some sort of explanations for it, but they are not convincing.[3] Such repetitions may rather be taken as indications of the fact that this long portion is an interpolation of a later date.

Though in all probability an interpolation, this portion of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is in some ways a useful addition. It says that when the *naṭī* enters drums should be played and while the song is on she should communicate its meaning and at the end of each verse the *naṭī* should dance and so on. This method seems akin to, if not identical with, our present day practice. This part would be helpful in tracing certain of the ancient practices. For though an interpolation, it is considerably old. Of course no value is to be attached to this so far as the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is concerned. Be that as it may, certain verses, including those that contain the reference to *sukumāra-prayoga*, and on which Abhinava draws several inferences,

[1] ibid. pp. 21-2.

[2] ibid. p. 182. For Abhinava's view on this *see* p. 181 et seq.

[3] A.B., Vol. I, p. 185, ll. 15-16; p. 188, l. 14 et seq.; p. 189, ll. 11-13.

seem to be later interpolations. If so, the usages of *sukumāra-prayoga* cannot be taken as reliable or belonging to the original text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. If we come to the word *tāṇḍava*, nowhere in the *Nāṭya-śāstra* do we find it to convey the sense of *uddhata*, as a counterpart to *lāsya* or *sukumāra*. Abhinava's putting of such a meaning into it is an act of intellectual gymnastics.

If therefore the usages *sukumāraprayoga* and the like are but interpolated and the word *tāṇḍava* does not connote the sense *uddhata*, then there is no reason to say that the classification of either *nṛtta* or *nṛtya* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* existed in the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Therefore it is not improper to conclude that before the *Nāṭyaśāstra nṛtya* did not exist, that Bharata is responsible for the creation of it while the classification of either *nṛtta* or *nṛtya* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* was still not known or even made in the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. And at that time the word *tāṇḍava* was a synonym of the word *nṛtta*. Even if Bharata's contact with Śiva, as described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, is considered to be unrealiable, the episode need not be taken to be untrue as once remarked, for through the mythological veil it certainly refers to some historical facts. If we look into this episode without paying any value to the mythological colouring, our conclusion would not change. It is in the time of Bharata that *nṛtta* came into contact with *nāṭya*, both being developed independently of each other uptill that time and it is this contact that lead to the creation of a new art, *nṛtya*, which is *Bharatopajñaka* (i.e. created by Bharata for the first time).

This is supported by Patañjali also, who often uses in his *Mahā-bhāṣya* the √*nṛt* in many forms, but never in the proper sense of *nṛtya*. The absence of a word or concept in a grammar book may not in all cases prove the non-existence of a given thing. But in this particular case, this omission may be taken as additional evidence, as it is in conformity with the matter deduced from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. While dealing with *nāṭya* we have mentioned that the *Mahābhāṣya* definitely refers to the art of *nāṭya*, so in every respect we have the support of the *Māhābhāṣya* of Patañjali in favour of our conclusion. In still older literature, including Vedic, the √*nṛt* is used, as has been brought to light by modern scholars. But so far none can point to any decisive evidence regarding the existence of *nṛtya*. On the contrary, they only prove the existence of *nṛtta*, of whatever kind

it may be. As Ananda K. Coomaraswamy points out, some usages of *hattamudda* (*hastamudrā*) can be noticed in Pālī literature too. How much older *Jātaka* literature is than the *Nāṭyaśāstra* has first to be considered before reaching any conclusion on the subject. Another problem connected with these usages is that *hastamudrā* is not known to be used in any work on *nṛtya*, *nṛtta* or *nāṭya*. It is only in the last two or three decades that this word has crept into use by some people in this field or science. In the literature concerned with these arts hand-gesture is always mentioned as *hastas* or *abhinaya-hastas* and *nṛtta-hastas* but never as *hastamudrā*. So it is necessary to investigate what is the tradition that works behind the usages of *hattamudda* in Pālī literature. Even if those usages are the same in every respect with the technical usages of the *hasta* in dramaturgic literature, they cannot disprove our conclusion that *nṛtya* was created by Bharata for the first time. It should be borne in mind that *abhinayahastas* are not confined to *nṛtya* alone, on the contrary, these come into existence along with *nāṭya* itself. Neither *nāṭya* nor its literature is in any way later than the beginnings of Pālī literature connected with Buddhism. Therefore there is as yet no evidence to disprove our conclusion reached mainly on the basis of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

A few odd usages of the √*nṛt* are not sufficient to prove the existence of *nṛtya* before the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Some modern translations of these usages earlier than the *Nāṭyaśāstra* treat it as mimicry. But this will not do here. We are concerned with definite concepts. The people who translate *nṛt* as mimicry should explain what they mean by mimicry and what they understand by the word *nṛtya*. So the modern translations need not disturb us.

Nowadays it is known to all that a school of *nṛtya* prevalent in South India is called *Bharata-nāṭyam*. Since when this appellation has been in vogue it is difficult to say with certainty. All that can be said with confidence is that it has gained ground from a few decades. Here it should be noted that Vipradāsa says (for reference see p. 9, footnote 1) that in a secondary or extended sense the word *nāṭya* could also be used to denote *nṛtya*. From the passages quoted in *Bharatakośa* it seems that Kumbha Rāṇā and Vipradāsa hold identical views in several respects. On this basis we may assume that Kumbha Rāṇā also says that the word *nāṭya* could be

used to mean *nṛtya*. On what grounds these authors say that the word *nāṭya* could be used to denote *nṛtya* is not important here. What is important is that they agree to it. In one sense or the other it might have been in vogue, because of which they had to note the fact. So, we have the evidence to reach a conclusion that the word *nāṭya* was used in the fifteenth century to mean also *nṛtya*. We know that Amarasiṃha in his lexicon mentions *nāṭya*, *nartana*, *tāṇḍava*, *lāsya*, *nṛtya* and *naṭana* to be synonyms. There is no clue in his book to know for what reasons he counts *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* to be synonyms. There is nothing that can explain this identification. The present practice and Vipradasa's clear statement on the one hand and on the other Amarasiṃha's entry are apparently similar in so far as calling *nṛtya* as *nāṭya* is concerned. Still no definite conclusion can be based on such a similarity, as between these practices there yawns a gulf of nearly ten centuries. We may, however, speculate that this new art gained a name of its own, *nṛtya*, before the fifth century A.D. when its classification as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* also came into existence. The period of three centuries is enough for this to take place. It should be borne in mind that it does not require much time for the development of *nṛtya*, because, as we have seen, *nṛtya* is a hybrid art, in other words, this is just a combination of two already well-developed, well-studied, well-analysed and well-codified arts, *nṛtta* and *nāṭya* (or, precisely speaking, *abhinaya* of *nāṭya*). Then there is another important fact. Before this new art, *nṛtya*, gained a name for itself, this might have been called by people (later than Bharata) by the very word *nāṭya*, but with a word *Bharata* prefixed to it, i.e. *Bharata-nāṭya*, which marks it off from *nāṭya* proper. In fact, there is nothing wrong or remarkable if it happened like that, because Bharata himself is responsible for the creation of this art. Here it may be pointed out that this assumption would not in any way go against the fact that most of the commentators on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* always mention this art as *nṛtta*, since their practice is in adherence to the verbal usages of the Nāṭyaśāstra and the practice as assumed here is a popular one. In spite of this it is perhaps going astray to say, as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy does, that 'Indian acting or dancing — the same word, *Nāṭya*, covers both the ideas—is thus a deliberate art.'[1]

[1] M.G., p. 18.

There is little room for doubt that the school of *nṛtya* known as *Bharatanāṭyam* is a continuation of the form and tradition started by Bharata himself, although from time to time other elements have entered into it. No other school of *nṛtya* prevailing today has closer relations with the theory of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* than this. This can be easily proved with illustrations. What has to be investigated is whether the present name, *Bharatanāṭyam*, has been in unbroken use from older times, as does the practice. If such an evidence comes to light, then the matter which is now one of conjecture, would become firmly established.

Thus we have reached a conclusion that Bharata himself is responsible for the creation of *nṛtya*. This much would, in fact, do for our present attempt at revaluating some of the usages of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. We may proceed a little further. There are two reasons: one is that the stage we have traced till now is but an initial stage, and the second is that some sort of material touching upon its later well developed stages is also available. This may help us in our effort to understand the meaning of the three arts—*nāṭya*, *nṛtta* and *nṛtya*— as revealed by older texts as well as the real conditions through which these arts have evolved.

In the introduction to his edition of the *Bhāvaprakāśa* of Śāradātanaya, taking the absence of the names of any *uparūpakas* and the frequent mention of some authors wherein Kohala's name is intimately connected with *uparūpakas*, K. S. Ramaswami Sastri points out that Kohala may be the inventor of these *uparūpakas*.[1] D. R. Mankad, believing in the development of *nāṭya* (*rūpakas*) from *nṛtya* (generally identified with *uparūpakas*), disagrees[2] with Sastri on this point and says that there is no occasion in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* to deal with *nṛtya*, so that its silence on the point should not be taken as a proof of the non-existence of *uparūpakas*. He further observes that 'it may be that Kohala had for the first time arranged and defined them. And, all the evidence cited by Mr. Sastri goes to connect Kohala's name with the rise of the *uparūpakas* but not with their invention'. We have already mentioned that Mankad's approach is unscientific, for he ignores historical facts and it is needless to repeat that he

[1] *See* Introduction to the B.P., 51 ff.

[2] T.S.D., 101 ff.

is not correct when he traces the origin of *nṛtya* before *nāṭya*. So his arguments against Sastri carry no value.

Before expressing our view about the opinion of Sastri, it is necessary to clear up one thing. *Uparūpakas* may be covered by *nṛtya*, but the word *uparūpaka* does not fully include all the possibilities of *nṛtya*, for the obvious reason that if a single piece of song or a verse, however short, is enacted or communicated with the help of a given technique, that would be *nṛtya*. In fact, *nṛtya* originated in this very way. Such short pieces are not included in the classification of *uparūpakas* or they do not come under any one of the names of recognised *uparūpakas*. Therefore it would be wrong to explain *uparūpakas* and *nṛtya* on the analogy of *rūpakas* and *nāṭya*.

While mentioning Kohala as the creator of *uparūpakas*, Sastri does not take into consideration all the facts from the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is also not clear whether in his opinion *nṛtya* and *uparūpakas* are identical or not. So long as he does not identify them, there is no real reason to raise any objection against his opinion that Kohala is the inventor of *uparūpakas*. At least no material has came to light to disprove this conclusion or assumption. Moreover, there are certain other things such as traditional glorification and mention of Kohala's name in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, etc., though these are not of a very definite nature, on the basis of which one can draw the same conclusion.

From *Amarakośa* we noted that by the fifth century A.D. *nṛtya* was sufficiently developed and classified to find a place in a lexicon. If, as we think, it was created in Bharata's time, i.e. in the second century A.D., then much had happened to it during those three centuries. Such a quick process of development is, as already mentioned, not impossible in the case of a hybrid art. If so, when and in whose hands did this development take place? In the tradition if anybody is highly spoken of after Bharata, that one person is Kohala. He is mentioned as Bharata's son and pupil. We come across such a mention in the first chapter of the present text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. In the same place we find, it is true, a hundred of such names, but the other sources are usually silent about them, except a few. Among these few Kohala is one. Several later authors quote some verses saying that they are taken from Kohala's work, even if until now we have not had any work that can be definitely ascribed to

him. Abhinava himself mentions his name in several places in connection with *uparūpakas*, indicating the fact that a great part of the development of *uparūpakas* is due to Kohala.[1] We may or may not believe in the account given in the present text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* with regard to sons of Bharata, but we can hardly dismiss the fact that Kohala follows Bharata very closely in point of time.

This is unmistakably supported by a statement in the present text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, that Kohala will elaborate the rest of the matters. To give it in the original: '*śeṣa muttara tantreṇa kohalaḥ kathayiṣyati.*'[2] This verse occurs, we must add, in one of the two big portions which we have ourselves indicated to be later interpolations in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Though this verse occurs in an unreliable portion, yet it will not fail to support the point in question. Taking all these facts into consideration we may say that in order to get Bharata's stamp on whatever Kohala says, this verse as well as the portion containing it have been inserted in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, but very unskilfully indeed. It does not necessarily mean that Kohala himself has done this. If he is not the person to do this, at least those, we may assume, who follow him closely, are responsible for this pious fraud. In any case, there can hardly be any doubt about the fact that Kohala comes after Bharata, obviously not after a long time, say, within a century or so.

From the same facts it follows that Kohala himself is responsible for the regularisation of *nṛtya* as well as the invention of the plays based on *nṛtya*. Of course, all the varieties of *uparūpakas* we know of may not be his work. That will be an unnatural supposition for which there is no evidence. The two verses quoted by Abhinava in Kohala's name and about whose content we have discussed at some length, may also be taken in support of the above conclusion. These two verses are significant indeed. There can be no doubt that Kohala plays a great role in the development of *nṛtya*.

It is a contention, in some quarters, that the word *rāga* is not

[1] A.B., Vol. I, pp. 173, 182, 183 and also Vol. II, p. 407.

[2] N.Ś., Chowkhāmbā, edition Ch. 36, p. 474. In the Kāvyamālā edition it is read in a slightly different and incorrect way. If these readings are amended there will not be a difference in the substance. *See* K.M. edition Ch. 37, p. 665.

known even in the earlier phases of the medieval age, say, in the 7th or 8th century A.D. But if another verse, quoted[1] by Abhinava in the name of Kohala in the discussion about the four *nṛtya* types that contain *abhinaya*, is reliable, then we can safely conclude that *rāga* with the concept familiar to us is used in the earlier centuries of the Christian era. It is well known that the word *rāga* occurs nowhere in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Taking the traditional glorification of Kohala in matters related to music also as a fact, and connecting the contents of this verse, we may conjecturally say that it is he who gives a turn to the music in one of the phases of its development. If all this turns out to be true, it will show that Kohala plays a unique role not only in the development of *nṛtya* but also of music.

Whatever may be the truth in respect of his contribution to music, it is not so important for our present discussion. So far as *nṛtya* goes he stands very high, even if he is not responsible for the creation of *nṛtya*, but one who regularises it and provides the plays to go with it. This can be said with some confidence. Here mention may be made that the things expounded in a chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, namely *Citrābhinayādhyāya*, seem to be related in a better way to *nṛtya* than to *nāṭya*. This is one of the chapters we suspect to be a later interpolation. This may be proved to some extent by the very fact that this chapter comes after everything concerned with the four kinds of *abhinayas* has been completed in the previous chapters. It is, however, now difficult to say anything definitely about the question as to whether the particular chapter was inserted in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* before Kohala's time or by him or after him. It is unfortunate that we are not in a position to know the date of so important an author as Kohala. On the basis of the account given above we may tentatively assume that he belongs to the period that begins with the third century and ends in the middle of the fourth century A.D. This means that *nṛtya* develops very well and also some *uparūpakas* find their way into the public repertory at this time. This is not the end of all problems connected with *nṛtya* and its development, what we have tried to do is to come to some conclusion regarding its origin and some of its developments. There are other problems to be worked out in regard to its further development, problems hard to solve at this time, but they are so important that no critical

[1] A.B., Vol. I, p. 184.

effort should be avoided to clear up the tangle in this area of ancient Indian aesthetics.

In the beginning of the seventh chapter of his work, *Saṅgītaratnākara*, Śārṅgadeva gives the account of the origin of these arts differently. It is as follows: *nartana* is of three kinds, namely, *nāṭya*, *nṛtya* and *nṛtta*. Brahma gives *Nāṭyaveda* i.e. *Nāṭyaśāstra* to Bharata. This implies that Bharata gets these three arts from Brahma. Then he says that Bharata along with *Gandharvas* and *Apsaras* performs all these three—*nāṭya*, *nṛtya* and *nṛtta*—in front of Śiva who shows his art, *tāṇḍava*, to them through Taṇḍu, i.e. according to the instructions of Śiva Taṇḍu shows it to Bharata and his followers. Pārvatī, his consort, shows her art, *lāsya*, to them. *Munis*, having learnt *tāṇḍava* from Taṇḍu, teach, in their turn, all the men. Pārvatī first teaches *lāsya* to Usā, the daughter of Bāṇa, from whom the *Gopīs* of Dvāravatī learn it. From these learn the women of Saurāṣṭra and from the latter do the women of the various countries. Now we can notice that by the time Śārṅgadeva writes his work, i.e. thirteenth century A.D., something which is related to the classification of *nṛtya* and *nṛtta* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* has been added to the birth-episode of *nāṭya*. Moreover, the original episode too, was falsified. This is plain because Bharata is said to receive all these three arts from Brahma and also to show them in front of Śiva. This and similar accounts, therefore, from the historical point of view carry no value.

To sum up our discussion about the origin of the three arts —*nṛtta*, *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*:

The art of *nṛtta*, as expounded in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, is prevalent from the very remote past. According to tradition it was originally created and practised by Śiva. But it is not possible, at least for the present, to assume any exact date for its first appearance. All that can be said is that it is much older than *nāṭya*.

The art of *nāṭya* was created by Brahma at a time when Jambūdvīpa was in a state of crisis and decay. This was done at the request of the gods to focus the true light on things so that the world might be saved from its self-created disastrous conditions. Although the beginning of the *Tretāyuga* in the *vaivasvata-manvantara* is given in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as its time of origin, yet no date can be definitely deduced from this legendary account. But *nāṭya* existed as a

well-developed and accomplished art in the fourth century B.C. Although *nṛtta* comes much earlier, yet *nāṭya* is not derived or developed from it. These two arts run parallel upto the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and meet only at that time.

The art of *nṛtya* was created by Bharata for the first time. It is an art which combines *abhinaya* with *nṛtta*. If Bharata's date is the second century A.D., then the beginnings of this art have to be traced to that period. But at this time it had no separate name of its own nor was it classified (as in later times) as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. It gained the independent name *nṛtya*, was canonised and developed in the hands of Kohala. Some plays were brought into being by Kohala with this new art or technique. Kohala's date is supposed to be sometime between the third century A.D. and the middle of the fourth century A.D. If this is true, then we may say that it was at this time that *nṛtya* became a full-fledged art.

EARLIEST KNOWN THEORIES

Nāṭya

AMONG scholars it is sometimes heard that Bharata nowhere in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* defines *nāṭya*, with the sole aim of expounding which he wrote that monumental work. This, if true, is an extraordinarily serious allegation. Bharata defines the definition itself, or to put it simply, he describes in very definite terms the method how a given thing should be defined.[1] He calls the definition *nirukta*. Accordingly he defines, at least the major subjects, *rasa*, *bhāva*, *abhinaya*, *pravṛtti* and so on.[2]. We need not for the present enter into such details and it would suffice to mention that in the whole of the available text of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* we do not indeed find anywhere a definition of *nāṭya* in a manner similar to the definitions of subjects referred to above. Nor do we find it to be defined in the manner of later writers, i.e. through preparing a ground or writing an *avataraṇikā*, and so on. Nevertheless, by this we need not at

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 6, Sls. 13-14, pp. 267-8. We have discussed in detail about these matters in our work (unpublished).

[2] ibid. *See* respectively Vol. I, p. 274 et seq.; p. 343 et seq.; Vol. II, pp. 1-2 and pp. 205-7.

the same time presume that he does not at all define it. Because he does, he says a lot about *nāṭya* in the episode itself which is narrated in the early chapters, especially in the first chapter. Such matters as virtues, purpose, technique, etc., all come within the topic dealing with *nāṭya*. There *nāṭya* is said to be characterised by all such matters. Naturally, one may be in favour of taking the whole of this description of characteristics to be its definition. But all such description, being somewhat loose for a definition or a part of a definition, does not appear to be meant by Bharata as such, but it is definitely a general description of certain vital features of *nāṭya*. There is, however, at the end of the description one verse which can legitimately be taken as Bharata's definition of *nāṭya*.

The fact that Bharata does not write all those verses in order to define *nāṭya*, but writes only to describe it and he writes a verse at the end of this description in order to define it, is proved further by his usages. In all those verses he uses *kṛtam* and *bhaviṣyati* which mean that *nāṭya* 'is created' by me and 'intended to be' such and such. On the contrary, in this particular verse he uses *ityabhidhīyate* meaning 'it is said'. Nowhere else in this context he uses this *abhidhīyate* or some similar words such as *prakīrtitam*, *ākhyātam*, *kathitam*, and so on. So it can no doubt be taken to be a decisive factor. But Manomohan Ghosh does not take this into consideration, and we cannot agree with him when he translates all these verses as if they were intended to define *nāṭya*.[1]

From one of the discussions conducted by Abhinava[2] it is clear that the verse which we are going to take as the one intended to define *nāṭya*, is accepted as such by ancient scholars, that is to say we have the support from at least a section, if not all, of the ancient authors. The particular verse runs thus:

> *'yo'yaṃ svabhāvo lokasya sukhaduḥkha-samanvitaḥ*
> *so'ṅgādyabhinayopeto nāṭya mityabhidhīyate'*[3]

Abhinava explains it in a way peculiar to him. His interpretation of it is clear to the scholarly world and if the meaning of this verse according to Abhinava's interpretation is to be shown here for the

[1] *See* E.T. of N.Ś., Vol. I, p. 16.
[2] A.B., Vol. I, p. 175.
[3] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 1, Sl. 122, p. 43.

benefit of the people who are not acquainted with his approach, it will call for a detailed explanation of fundamental questions. Space does not permit us to enter into such lengthy exposition. Moreover it would hamper the continuity of our discussion. Suffice it to mention that to Abhinava *nāṭya* means *rasa* (*nāṭya eva rasaḥ*); not only this, even a *śravyakāvya* (poetry or epic), in his opinion, can evoke *rasa*, only because it contains dramatic quality. With great vigour he argues in several places that *nāṭya* is *rasa*. The present verse is one of those places where he attempts to affirm his theory. The meaning of this verse, as he explains it, may be expressed in one sentence: *Rasa* is called *nāṭya*. We cannot accept this theory because such a theory cannot be established on the basis of Bharata's verses, unless they are submitted to unnecessary scholastic twists and hammered heavily.

What this verse actually means is as follows: This very nature of the world, mingled with joy and grief or pleasure and pain, is called *nāṭya* when it is conveyed through the acts of communication that belong to the body and the like (i.e. through *āṅgika*, *sāttvika*, *vācika* and *āhārya abhinayas*). To put it in an another way, the everyday experience of the world, the simultaneous experience of joy and grief, is *nāṭya*, when it is conveyed through the different *abhinayas*.

We have seen at the outset that medieval theorists, like Dhanañjaya, define *nāṭya* to be *rasāśraya*. Such a definition really cannot distinguish *nāṭya* from similar art (*sajātīya-vastu*), *nṛtya* itself. They distinguish *nāṭya* from *nṛtya* by defining the latter to be expressive of *bhāva* (*bhāvāśraya*), but we have seen how absurd it is to define the latter as *bhāvāśraya*. Similarly their definition cannot distinguish also from several dissimilar things (*vijātīya-vastu*), like *śravya-kāvya*, poem; *saṅgīta*, music; *citra*, painting; *bhāskarya*, sculpture, and so on, because all these are quite capable of expressing *rasa* in a highly effective way. We should also note that the medieval theorists want to define *nṛtya* as *bhāvāśraya* and because of this, in order to show the contrast, they call *nāṭya rasāśraya*. But apart from this they also mention *nāṭya* to be *avasthānukṛti*, i.e. a representation of the different conditions of a given individual (*anukārya*) who is either known from older sources or an imaginary person as the case may be. But the fact that representation is not in anyway

exclusive to *nāṭya* alone, for *nṛtya* also is such, is accepted by these theorists themselves.

If that is so, what would be the special characteristics in *nāṭya* according to this theory is *rasāśraya*, i.e. to be expressive of *rasa* (if this phrase is not literally translated). But this factor, as we have seen, is not capable of giving a precise understanding of *nāṭya*. In fact their explanation of *nāṭya* as *avasthānukṛti* is based on Bharata's exposition itself, for example as is seen in the first hemistich of the verse quoted above. Rather this is of an explanatory nature, and is yet incapable of giving a comprehensive idea as Bharata's verse does. The difference between these two methods will be clear if we see how Bharata treats the subject.

Generally speaking, in the later ages exponents of different theories or writers on a similar subject find it easy to define a thing on the basis of the result it leads to or induces. *Rasa*, being a result of fine arts, is taken to be such a centre, on the basis of which definitions are made. Apart from this method, one can also define a thing on the basis of the means employed or on the basis of both ends and means.

Bharata takes not only the experience of human beings but that of the world as a whole and considers the means of conveying it in an effective way as the basis of his definition. To put it simply, he takes the means and defines *nāṭya* on their basis. Over and above these, stands the emotional aspect on the strength of which he gives the definition. In this he is unlike the later writers who deal with things purely on dry scholastic considerations. Not only in the case of this definition but in the study of the whole of the *Nāṭyaśastra*, to neglect the emotional aspect is to be guilty of incomplete understanding, for the simple reason that Bharata speaks of *nāṭya* from a very different level. For Bharata *nāṭya* is not a profession, nor a scholastic curiosity, it is life itself. Owing to this, the exposition of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, at least in places, is highly poetic, with a language direct, simple and effective. The place in which the definition of *nāṭya* occurs is a masterpiece.

To continue, we have seen that in the episode it is said that the first performance of *nāṭya* took place on the occasion of *dhvajamaha* (flag festival). In that festival demons or *dānavas* also were present. The play staged at that time was *Amṛtamanthana* (churning of the ocean

for ambrosia), i.e. it is based on this theme.[1] Naturally *dānavas* present at that place took great offence and began to create obstacles. There was fighting again and interruption of the play. Somehow the *devas* managed to get over the obstacles and they requested Brahma first to warn the *dānavas* peacefully, otherwise they would settle the matter even by force.

Brahma questioned the *dānavas* as to why they had taken offence. *Virūpākṣa*, the leader of the *dānavas*, came forward and said that he had created this at the request of the gods, but this was malicious and scandalous (*pratyādeśa* or *khalīkāra*) to them. This was not expected from him, since they too, like the *devas*, came from him, the one source of all things. Here Brahma described *nāṭya* to the *dānāvas* to make them realise its real nature. It is impossible, at least for us, to translate this portion preserving its original beauty. But let us try to give at least a bare idea of it.

O *dānavas*, get rid of your anger and be free from aversion. *Nāṭya* was created by me in such a way as to show its association with deeds and ideas, so that it will act as a guide to realise the good and the bad in the case of you people too, as with the *devas*. Do not think that the *devas* and you alone were kept in view at the time of its creation, do realise that not only you and the *devas* but also the whole world is involved in it. Because of this, you will be able to see in it sometimes righteousness (*dharma*), sometimes play, sometimes wealth (*artha*), sometimes tranquillity, sometimes laughter, sometimes fight, sometimes passion or desire, sometimes slaughter and so on. It will be a source of different things for the people who have various inclinations—such as, righteousness (*dharma*) for those who desire it, passion for those who are inclined that way, a check to those who are undisciplined, restraint to those who are disciplined, boldness to those who are meek or impotent, energy or enthusiasm to those who are brave and full of self-respect, wisdom to those who are stupid, skill to those who are learned, pastime to the rulers, stability to those who suffer

[1] This is a mythological story. Once upon a time *devas* and *dānavas*, children of two sisters, yet rivals to each other, churned the ocean in order to get the *amṛta*, ambrosia, and after a great struggle they succeeded. But each party wanted to get it only for itself and this led to a fight. At this juncture the *devas* approached *Viṣṇu* to help them and he, agreeing, entered the spot in the disguise of a marvellously beautiful young girl and turned the *dānavas* stupid. She asked both the parties not to fight as she would distribute the *amṛta* to them alike. They sat in order in opposite rows. She began to give the ambrosia first to the *devas* and she managed to distribute it in such a way that it was soon exhausted. Stupified with the beauty of the girl, the *dānavas* were not in a position to realize what was happening and at last became fools, beauty's victims.

from grief, wealth to those who want it, will to those who are depressed and so on. Thus *nāṭya* is full of all kinds of ideas, is based on many and varied situations, and created to be a representation of the behaviour or action (*vṛtta*) of the world. It is based on the actions of the men who are great (*uttama*), common (*madhyama*), as well as low (*adhama*). Being instructive, it yields stability, pastime and happiness. It will provide in proper time rest or relief to those who are immersed in austerity (*tapasvin*), to those who have suffered from grief, or been struck with calamities and are exhausted. It will yield virtue, fame, life, good, intellect, knowledge of the world, etc. There is no knowledge, no skill, no learning, no art, no meditation, no deed, which is not found in the *nāṭya*. Thus *nāṭya* is a representation of the whole world (*sapta-dvīpa*). So, o *dānavas*, you need not be angry against the *devas* over this, i.e. *nāṭya*. Because this *nāṭya*, created by me, is a representation of the whole world, it reveals the truths to the *devas* as well as to you *dānavas*, and to kings, householders, even to *brahmarṣis*.'[1]

Through the mouth of Brahma, Bharata defines *nāṭya* in one verse after this discourse, rather with this as background, the verse which has already been quoted above and explained. To repeat, the everyday experience of the world, an experience mingled with joy and grief, is the *nāṭya* when it is conveyed through the different *abhinayas*. Here the different *abhinayas* mean all the four, *vācika*, *āṅgika*, *sāttvika* and *āhārya*.

This definition includes everything that *nāṭya* needs, all the problems that centre round the drama are implicit in it. Let us consider them one by one.

Here the experience itself is said to be *nāṭya*, the experience which is abstract involves other things as well. Experience also brings an idea of instruction into our mind, because experience teaches (*upadiśati*), for otherwise what would be the use of it? Secondly, bliss also is included in this, because an experience causes some other experience, but the resulting experience cannot be the same as the one which causes it, because the former manifests itself in our hearts through a special medium. Thus this expression brings these aspects — instruction and bliss — into our understanding.

The idea of representation also comes into our mind when we hear the word *abhinaya*. But the latter cannot be explained as representation, when it is used in the sense of one's presence or working or acting in the place of someone else. Through some act or actions

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. I, pp. 34-43.

alone it is possible for one to behave or act like someone else. Here the acts needed to behave or act like someone else, are our four *abhinayas*. This shows clearly that *abhinaya* and representation are not identical, indeed, they are altogether different things. Owing to a complete dependence of representation on *abhinaya*, the sense of representation also comes into our mind when we hear the word *abhinaya*. In other words, *anukṛti* and *abhinaya* should not be understood to be identical.

Apart from this there is another point that should be noted in connection with *abhinaya*. Suppose that a *naṭa* without having a bow and arrow in the hands shows some actions with *kapittha* and *khaṭakāmukha* in the left and right hands respectively, we at once understand that he is shooting with an arrow. What does it mean now? It means that he communicates to us the sense of shooting with an arrow, but he does not actually show the real thing, and he cannot, because he has no real things to show real shooting, moreover it is not necessary. Even without imitating Rāma or a hunter, the *naṭa* can represent them. This proves two things—one is that representation is not imitation and, secondly, that *abhinaya* is not representation. This is why in the beginning while explaining *abhinaya*, we have said that *abhinaya* is an act of communication of the performer; it is not representation.[1]

As we have now seen what *abhinaya* really means, it is better to think of the related problems in terms of the significance of *abhinaya* rather than translating it at first as acting and thinking of it in terms of the meaning associated with an alien word and culture. This method would be proper not only in the case of *abhinaya*, but also in the case of every technical term. To neglect the cultural matrix is to fall into needless error.

[1] Generally by acting or action we understand one's unreal action, unreal in the sense that the action seen in one is not that which is caused in one's life by a given situation. Or we take it to mean to behave like someone else. In both these ways we understand it as an action which has no reference to or is not related to the life of one who shows it. But it should not be understood as an imitation or pretence or mimicry, since such is not the thing to be conveyed by *abhinaya* in Indian dramaturgy. So even if we commonly use action, we should use it in the sense that the performer's action which is intended to communicate something.

Further it is worthwhile to mention the following: The meaning of *abhinaya*, as pointed out, is the bringing forth of the *artha*, things, into the consciousness of the spectators. But by *artha* a number of people seem to take into consideration *rasa* and *bhāva* also, sometimes nothing but these. But it would be wrong to think of it as a factor which brings *rasa* and *bhāva* directly. If it is capable of bringing *rasa* and *bhāva* directly into the hearts of the spectators, then all persons, without exception, would have been able to relish it and that too in equal degree, because the *naṭa* makes no discrimination while he communicates things. But the fact is different. Among the people present at the performance of a given drama, some may be able to relish *rasa* comparatively less than others, while it is a possibility that at least some persons may be there who are not at all capable of relishing it. This proves that *abhinaya* does not or cannot bring *rasa* directly into the hearts of *sahṛdayas*. In fact the nature of *rasa* is such. *Rasa* cannot be brought from outside and poured into one's heart. Essentially *rasa* manifests from within. So what *abhinaya* does is that it furnishes the necessary *artha*, things or the sense of things, by which, if other conditions are favourable, *rasa* may manifest itself from within ones's heart. To elaborate it a little, *abhinaya* furnishes *artha* to the *sahṛdaya* most of which will work as *vibhāva* and *anubhāva* which are required for *rasa*-manifestation, but *abhinaya* itself is neither *vibhāva* nor *anubhāva*.

That being its nature, *abhinaya* works as a means to communicate the experience of the world. In other words, the experience of the world, as noted or observed in life, is not *nāṭya*; it is called *nāṭya* only when it is communicated or intimated by means of *abhinaya*. When there is an *abhinaya* there is representation. Without *abhinaya* there is no drama. So there is no *nāṭya* without representation, that is to say that in no circumstances, even as a variety, is there no non-representational drama. Representation is a concomitant with drama or *nāṭya*.

Thus Bharata's definition of *nāṭya* includes all these facts and problems. According to Bharata *nāṭya* is the experience of the world only when it is represented, in order to provide bliss and instruction as well, by means of acts of communication which do not belong to everyday life.

Nṛtta

Bharata defines *nṛtta* in the fourth chapter of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* where its technique is explained. He defines it through the mouth of Śiva, i.e. as if it was said by Śiva. The definition runs as follows:

> *mayāpīdaṃ smṛtaṃ nṛttaṃ sandhyākāleṣu nṛtyatā*
> *nānākaraṇa-saṃyuktai raṅgahārair vibhūṣitam*[1]

If those matters that are connected with the episode are left out and then the definition of *nṛtta* is translated, it would be as follows: '*Nṛtta* is of *aṅgahāras* which are made of *karaṇas*.' This definition would be sufficient to give a comprehensive idea about *nṛtta*. But to realize the comprehensiveness of this definition it is necessary to know about *aṅgahāras* and *karaṇas*, which are dealt with at length in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself. Any detailed description or individual description of *aṅgahāras* and *karaṇas* would not fall within our plan, so let us see according to their general definition what are *aṅgahāras* and what are *karaṇas*.

Bharata says that *aṅgahāras* are made of *karaṇas*. But Abhinava explains this compound word, *aṅgahāra* in two ways. Firstly, he says that *aṅgahāra* is 'sending the limbs (of the body) from a given place to the other proper one'. Secondly, he gives the explanation, *hāra* means 'of Śiva' i.e. the play (*prayoga*, lit. performance) of Śiva, so *aṅgahāra* means the play of Śiva which is to be done (*nirvartya*) by limbs[2] (of the body). In other words, the performance solely based on the movements of different limbs of the body as done by Śiva, i.e. the method in which Śiva practises it, is *aṅgahāra*. Apparently the latter explanation is a fanciful one. It would appear to be so in view also of the fact that Śiva himself, according to the account given by Bharata, uses the word, *aṅgahāra*.

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 89. Here *nṛttam* is an amendation for *nṛtyam* which is available in print. In this context, which is concerned with *nṛtta* alone, the reading *nṛtyam* would be incorrect and moreover we have discussed this matter previously and mentioned that originally such a word does not occur anywhere in this work. So in no sense the word *nṛtyam* can be taken to be correct. The Chowkhāmbā edition reads *nṛtta* (*see* p. 28).

[2] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 90, ll. 18-20. For the former explanation also *see* p. 21, ll. 20-1 where the reading *prāpta* seems incorrect, the proper word might be *prāpaṇa*.

Perhaps Abhinava gives this explanation based on the traditional account that Śiva practises *nṛtta*. Whatever may be the reasons for it, this latter explanation seems to be fanciful. It would be desirable to confine ourselves to the former explanation, i.e. 'sending the limbs of the body from a given place to the other proper one.'

Bharata defines *karaṇa* in this way: *hastapādasamāyogo nṛttasya karaṇaṃ bhavet.*[1] This means that the perfect composition of hands and feet is called *karaṇa*. Unless the other limbs accompany the hands and feet, it is not anatomically possible to keep them in a perfect composition. So this definition implies that other limbs too must follow them. Although this matter is not verbally mentioned in the definition itself, in fact there is no necessity, yet this point is not neglected. Just before expounding each and every *karaṇa* with its exclusive process Bharata says that he is going to deal with the 'possible' movement of hands and feet, the movement that is accompanied by waist, sides, head, chest, back and abdomen[2] (i.e. accompanied by their movement). Perhaps keeping all this in mind, Abhinava, while commenting on this definition, explains *karaṇa* to be a compact and uninterrupted single unit of act of different limbs such as *śākhā*, *aṅga*, *upāṅga*, *pārśva*, *kaṭī*, *ūru*, *jaṅghā*,

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 92. Here too we have amended *nṛtya* as *nṛtta*. The Chowkhāmbā edition reads *nṛtta* as it does in the case of the definition of *nṛtta* (*see* p. 29).

[2] '*hastapādapracārantu kaṭipārśvorus*aṃyutam uraḥpṛṣṭodaropetaṃ vakṣyamāṇaṃ nibodhata*'. N.S., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 96. *Here the reading *ūru* does not seem correct, since it is included in the expression *pāda*. It seems proper that it should be *śiraḥ* or one of its synonyms, as no such word occurs elsewhere in this verse and it must be present in some place. We think that the reading *kaṭipārśvaśiroyutam* would be necessary. This assumption seems plausible when Abhinava's explanation of the definition of *karaṇa* is noticed. Apart from this Bharata himself prescribes in some *karaṇas* like *lalita*, *nāgāpasarpita*, *gaṅgāvataraṇa* etc., as to what kind of *śiras* should be used. Commenting on Śārṅgadeva's use of *ādi* in the definition of *karaṇa*, Kallinātha correctly says *śirovakṣaḥ pārśvakaṭīnām*, but falls into error while saying '*bāhujaṅghādīnām*'. So we gave our explanation according to this assumption, rejecting the reading *ūru*.

We have pointed out in one of our unpublished papers, viz., '*Hastapracāras: Three or Five?*', that Bharata uses words like *pracāra*, *karaṇa*, etc., to mean different kinds of movements. Here in this verse too the word *pracāra* does not mean simply movement but anatomically possible movement. That is why we have explained it in the body of the text as 'possible' movement.

caraṇa, and so on, the act which starts from a given place and terminates after reaching the other proper one.[1]

Both *aṅgahāra* and *karaṇa*, being acts leading to the perfect composition of different limbs or body may at the first sight seem to be one and the same. From a remark of his,[2] it seems that Abhinava too tends to consider them to be, in one sense or the other, quite similar. That some kind of similarity between these two exists, is inevitable for the simple reason that *aṅgahāra* is composed of *karaṇas*. Similarly *nṛtta* and *aṅgahāras* may seem to be identical, almost for the same reason. Here it may be pointed out that *nṛtta* and *aṅgahāras* cannot be one and the same. *Nṛtta* is said to be composed of *aṅgahāras*, but it is not said that *aṅgahāras* themselves are *nṛtta*. So there should not be any doubt about the fact that *nṛtta* is an entity.

Also *aṅgahāra* and *karaṇa* are not one and the same, even if the former is made of the latter and both of them lead to a perfect composition of the body. *Aṅgahāra* is mainly made of *karaṇas*. But they need *recakas* also, which are a particular type of movements of the four limbs—neck, hand, waist and foot. *Recakas* fulfil a two-fold purpose—beautification and filling up the gaps among the movements in such a way as the total movements of *aṅgahāra* may precisely fit in or be adjusted to a given *tāla*. That is why Bharata says '*nānākaraṇasaṃyuktān vyākhyāsyāmi sarecakān.*'[3] This clearly shows that *aṅgahāra* is conceived as distinct from *karaṇas*, i.e. not simply as a totality of a given number of *karaṇas*. Thus though both of them — *aṅgahāra* and *karaṇa* — have much in common, yet each possesses a distinctive character of its own.

Another fact to be pointed out here is that *karaṇas* themselves are made of *cārīs*, *nṛttahastas* and also *sthānas*, as clearly stated in the preliminary remarks on *karaṇas*.[4] Now the question is which of these — *aṅgahāras*, *karaṇas*, *cārī-sthāna-nṛttahastas* — should be considered to be the basic unit of *nṛtta*? In this matter Abhinava says that the combination of two *karaṇas*, called *nṛttamātṛkā*, is the basic unit of *nṛtta*. Obviously he depends upon the literal meaning of the

[1] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 92, ll. 21-3.

[2] ibid. p. 92, ll. 16-17. His other similar remark (p. 171, ll. 16-17) also needs a careful study.

[3] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 90.

[4] ibid. p. 97.

word, *nṛttamātṛkā*. He answers the question why it should be considered to be a basic unit by saying that until the two *karaṇas* are performed we will not have a sense of *nṛtta* and from the performance of the second *karaṇa* onwards we will have the sense that one is dancing[1] (*nṛtyati*).

But this view does not seem to be quite precise, since the sense that one *has danced* may not come into our minds if we witness the performance of two *karaṇas* only. The sense that one *is dancing* may very well come into our minds when the performance of the single *karaṇa* is witnessed. Apart from these reasons it is not possible to take *nṛttamātṛkā* to be the basic unit, if the text available in print is relied upon, even though the literal meaning of this word might tempt one to draw such a conclusion. *Nṛttamātṛkā* is nothing but a name for the combination of two *karaṇas*, as *kalāpaka*, *maṇḍaka* and *saṅghātaka* are the names of the combinations of three, four and five *karaṇas* respectively.[2] When the word *nṛttamātṛkā* thus used does not mean the basic unit, it is to be pointed out that there is no

[1] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 93, ll. 17-18. These lines need correction and V. Rāghavan has done it on the basis of Jāyaṇa who, like Śārṅgadeva, follows Abhinava in several matters. But Rāghavan himself has been a little mistaken while explaining these matters (*See Brahmavidyā*, a quarterly Journal published from Adyar Library, Vol. XVIII, parts 3-4, pp. 197-8).

[2] '*dve nṛttakaraṇe caiva bhavato nṛttamātṛkā*
dvābhyāṃ tribhiś caturbhir vāpyaṅgahārastu mātṛbhiḥ
tribhiḥ kalāpakaṃ caiva caturbhir maṇḍakaṃ bhavet
pañcaiva karaṇāni syuḥ saṅghātaka iti smṛtaḥ
ṣadbhir vā saptabhirvāpi aṣṭabhir navabhis tathā
karaṇai riha saṃyuktā aṅgahārāḥ prakīrtitāḥ'.

N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 93.

In the second line of this passage on the one hand and on the other in the fifth and sixth lines, *aṅgahāras* are explained, but there is some difference in the accounts given in them. According to the second line an *aṅgahāra* would be composed of two or three or four *nṛttamātṛkas*, i.e. four, six and eight *karaṇas*, thus no odd umber occurs here. But according to the fifth and sixth lines *aṅgahāra* may be composed of *karaṇas* numbering six, seven, eight or nine and so on, that is to say, according to this account the odd number is permissible, but such is not the case with the former. Also, the former account admits *aṅgahāra* to be composed of four *karaṇas*, but not so the latter. The latter account admits *aṅgahāra* to be also composed of nine *karaṇas*, but never the former. So, either of these accounts must be unreliable.

In this particular place Abhinava is silent about the latter account. Nor

verbal mention of the basic unit in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. So we have to come to the conclusion about the basic unit of *nṛtta* depending on the nature of *nṛtta* and its properties. Although *nṛtta* is made of *aṅgahāras*, yet they need not be taken to be *basic units*. They may be the units. *Cārīs*, *nṛttahastas* and *sthānas* cannot individually be taken to be *basic units* either, since they do not individually characterise *nṛtta*. If they are said to be so collectively, that means *karaṇa*, for other than *karaṇa* they have no separate collective form of their own. In reality, *karaṇa* is the very factor that characterises not only *nṛtta* but also *aṅgahāra* out of which *nṛtta* is made. *Karaṇa* as the pattern or type characterises *nṛtta*. *Nṛtta* is built up by the clever arrangement of these patterns with a process similar to that of architecture. Therefore, there cannot be any doubt about the fact that the *basic unit* of *nṛtta* is *karaṇa*.

does he touch *kalāpaka*, *maṇḍaka* and *saṅghātaka*. From this it is difficult to draw the conclusion that he does not know of such a text. But Śārṅgadeva mentions *kalāpaka* and the rest to be expounded by others, implicitly by others than Bharata. Perhaps Abhinava's silence on the issue is the reason for his taking such a view. Again the point to note is that Śārṅgadeva's commentators, Siṅgabhūpāla and Kallinātha, take different attitudes while explaining *nṛttamātṛkā* (S.R., Vol. IV, Ch. 7, pp. 252–6).

As these accounts differ, it is necessary to come to a conclusion about the problem as to which of these two accounts is reliable. Taking *vā* of *caturbhirvā* Abhinava says that variation in number is permissible, but it is not clear whether he means variation in *karaṇas* or *nṛttamātṛkas*. His followers Śārṅgadeva and Jāyaṇa take it to mean the variation in *karaṇas*, but it would prove wrong when we consider the original text as available. According to the original, *nṛttamātṛkās* may vary. Implicitly that variation too should follow within the limits—two, three and four. This may be presumed because the definite numbers are mentioned and there is no mention of words like *adhika*. For some reason or the other even this expression is interpreted to mean 'more than four', *aṅgahāra*, according to this account, must always be composed of an even number of *karaṇas*, because here *aṅgahāra* is explained in terms of *nṛttamātṛkā* which is always a combination of two *karaṇas*. Thus the difference in these two accounts is inevitable.

Examination of individual *aṅgahāras* may throw some light on this. There is no *aṅgahāra* comprising four *karaṇas* (or two *nṛttamātṛkas* as the former account speaks of) and among the *aṅghāras* there are several which are composed of both an even and an odd number of *karaṇas*, which fact the former account does not admit. There are also such *aṅgahāras* which are composed of more than eight *karaṇas* which fact again the former account does not accept. (Abhinava too clearly admits these facts. *See* Vol. I, p. 164, ll. 12–18). All these facts

Thus we have seen that *karaṇa* is the basic unit of *nṛtta*, *karaṇa* which is the perfect composition of hands and feet, in other words, of the whole body. Later theorists or commentators try to describe *karaṇas* as the means of conveying certain things, *arthas*, as proved by Abhinava's explanation of *līna*, *svastikarecita*, *maṇḍalasvastika*, [1] and so on. This tendency comes into practice in the later ages, but it is not found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* as is quite clear from our discussion about the origin of *nṛtya*. So far as the *Nāṭyaśāstra* goes, in its definition or description of *karaṇas*, or even *nṛtta*, there is no mention at all of representation. This obviously means that *nṛtta* is a non-representational art. Non-representational need not mean non-figurative, as is sometimes meant in the modern age in connection with arts like painting, that is to say that *nṛtta* is non-representational but obviously not non-figurative. In fact it is the art which is solely dependent on the form, that is to say its life is in the formal beauty. This is the very reason for defining *karaṇa* to be a perfect

go in favour of the latter account. Although Abhinava seems to accept the second line of the above passage, it is grammatically incorrect, as all the numeral adjectives are not in the feminine gender while the noun is. These adjectives, as they are, should refer to *karaṇa*, but there is no such word near them. Metre does not allow the changing of these adjectives into the feminine gender. Of course both the K.M. and Chowkhāmbā editions read *dvābhyāṃ tri-caturābhir vāpyaṅgahārastu mātṛbhiḥ*' (p. 38 and p. 29 respectively) and grammatically this reading is correct. But *aṅgahāras*, as mentioned above, do not strictly follow this definition. Apart from this, it interrupts the topic. If the second line is rejected, then we get the meaning from this passage that the combination of two, three, four and five *karaṇas* are respectively called *nṛttamātṛkā*, *kalāpaka*, *maṇḍaka*, and *saṅghātaka* while the combination of *karaṇas* numbering either six, seven, eight, nine and so on is called *aṅgahāra*. As a meaning it is quite logical. If so, this goes against Abhinava's interpretation of *nṛttamātṛkā* as the basic unit of *nṛtta*, because in this context it is not mentioned to be so. Still the utility of these *kalāpaka* and others, except *aṅgahāra*, is to be found out by further investigation. If this whole account of naming *kalāpaka*, *maṇḍaka*, etc. is to be rejected on the ground that their utility is not clear to us, then it is true in the case of the first and second lines of the above passage, since they do not fit into this context. Thus, in any case, Abhinava's interpretation of *nṛttamātṛkā* is not acceptable. Further researches may prove whether there was originally a verbal mention about the basic unit of *nṛtta* in the N.Ś. For the present it would not be incorrect to accept *karaṇa* itself to be a basic unit of *nṛtta*, depending on the nature of *nṛtta* and its properties.

[1] A.B., Vol. I, pp. 101-3

composition of the whole body. Unless each and every *karaṇa* is individually illustrated it is not possible to point out how a perfect composition is achieved and the elements that are required for such a composition. The nature of our present work does not permit us to enter into all such details, but attention may be drawn to certain vital remarks in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* the significance of which does not come into prominence owing to the superficiality of criticism and bookishness now prevailing.

The most important things among such remarks are two and these are concerned with what is called *sauṣṭhava* and *caturaśra*. *Sauṣṭhava* is a state of body characterised by the raised chest (*samunnatam uraḥ*), elbow and head of the deltoid falling in a line (*kūrparo'ṃsaśiras tathā* [*samaḥ?*]) and waist and ears falling in a line (*kaṭī karṇasamā*). This is to say that one should keep the ears and waist in one line and elbows and head of the deltoid in one line while the chest is to be kept raised in order to attain *sauṣṭhava*. This is a description of keeping the different limbs in given places. Apart from this, *sauṣṭhava* demands also a given method in keeping the body. In *sauṣṭhava* the body should be free from shaking or tremor in the postures (*acañcala*), it should also be free from curves or bent or drooping (*akubja*, lit., not dwarfed), also it should be steady or at rest in whatever posture it may be (*sanna*=*svaviśrāntapariṇata*). Further, says Bharata, '*śobhā sarvaiva nityaṃ hi sauṣṭhavaṃ samupāśritā/nahi sauṣṭhavahīnāṅgaḥ śobhate nāṭyanṛttayoḥ*'[1], i.e. the whole beauty always rests on the *sauṣṭhava*, so the performer never shines without having this. *Cāturaśrya* of *aṅga*, squarish body, is that when the

[1] N.Ś., Vol. II, Ch. 10, pp. 114-15. In the printed text the description of *sauṣṭhava* occurs also in Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 97; but Abhinava comments on it in Ch. 10 and it seems that that is the proper place. In this place there is one expression '*nātyuccaṃ calapādaṃ ca*' and there are also some variants here. We are neither able to derive a satisfactory meaning from it nor even to amend it. S. R. too is not helpful here. Further, instead of '*kaṭī karṇasamā*', S.R. reads '*kaṭī jānusamā*' and both the commentators on it, Siṅgabhūpāla and Kallinātha, create confusion in this place, by explaining it incorrectly (*see* Vol. IV, pp. 321-2). Here *jānusamā* does not seem proper reading, because such a condition is not possible in most of the *karaṇas*. Whereas in most cases the waist and ears can be in one line, so it is better to adhere to the reading *karṇasamā*. It should be noted here that we have left the expression *nātyuccaṃ calapādaṃ ca* unexplained in the body of our work, as it needs further investigation.

chest is raised and the hands remain at the waist and the umbilicus or navel as in the *vaiṣṇava-sthāna*.[1] Although here the position of the hands is also described, yet it is the chest that is the essential feature in a square composition. The position of the hands is to be decided in relation to the chest, that is to say that even the hands in accordance with the situation may not remain at the waist and navel, and still *cāturaśrya* composition is achieved, provided that their position is decided in relation with the chest in such a way that a square composition may still prevail. This can be said because in most of the *karaṇas* in which the position of the hands will remain elsewhere, *caturaśra* composition is essential. Perhaps with this idea in mind Abhinava, commenting on one of the *nṛttahastas*—*caturaśrau*—says that in order to obtain *cāturaśrya* one should keep *khaṭakāmukhahastas* at the distance of eight *aṅgulas* from the chest while they are in eight *aṅgulas* distance from each other and while the heads of the deltoids and elbows are kept in one line like a rod of the balance.[2] Thus in *nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata what is most important is the square composition. Abhinava clearly says that the vital principle of the body in dance is based on the square, i.e. square composition (*cāturaśryamūlaṃ nṛtte'ṅgasya jīvitam*)[3]. He goes to the extent of saying that *sauṣṭhava* is meant to attain the *cāturaśrya* ('*sauṣṭhavaṃ yadarthaṃ tatsarvasāmānyabhūtaṃ cāturaśryam*')[4]. It may not be out of place to warn the reader that one need not take this stress on square composition to be a denial of other shapes in the bodily compositions of *nṛtta*. It has been already pointed out that this square composition is prescribed mainly in relation with the chest. So it is not in any way a denial of other compositions. As a matter of fact, all varieties of compositions—square, triangle, circle, and so on do exist in this school of *nṛtta*.

Apart from the nature of individual *karaṇas*, which subject we do not treat here, the above remarks on certain general features, like *sauṣṭhava* and *cāturaśrya*, would do for the present, to give a general idea of the fact that *nṛtta* rests solely on formal beauty. The formal beauty is obtained through the perfect composition of the

[1] ibid.
[2] A.B., Vol. II, Ch. 9, p. 71.
[3] ibid.
[4] ibid. Vol. II, Ch. 10, p. 115.

whole body. The composition involves all the geometrical qualities and other things. There must be a balance, other than the equilibrium of the body, i.e. the balance of masses. There must be a relation, the relation of a given limb to the other which is either following it in the same direction or playing the counterpart in a different direction. There must be a flow of harmonious and clearcut lines. There must be ease even in the difficult postures. (Here the difficult postures refer to those which are cultivated, i.e. those which are not seen in everyday life.) The ease comes only when we do not try to violate the anatomical principles. Above all, there must be movement in the whole body. All these qualities must be present in every fraction of the time in which *karaṇas* take place, *karaṇas* which are made of *sthānas* (states) on the one hand and *carīs* and *nṛttahastas* on the other (which are nothing but the movements of feet and hands). Owing to the fact that every basic unit of *nṛtta*, viz. *karaṇa* is well thought out it is also complete in itself. So there is no need to mention that *nṛtta* is complete in itself in every place and every time. You can perform it in the courtyard of a royal palace or in a village street, in a huge and massive royal auditorium or a narrow and humble hut, in a well-planned theatre or by the sea shore, it makes no difference. You may perform it in the morning, noon, evening, twilight, night or spring, winter, summer, it makes no difference. You may arrange it in a group or singly, it makes no difference. You may have make-up or even may not have, it makes no difference. This is because it is complete in itself, independent of accidents.

Thus *nṛtta* needs almost all of the qualities that architecture does. In fact it is a kind of architecture. *Nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata is a moving Koṇārka temple of unmutilated form. The difference between them is that this does not embody a *Sūrya* statue, but *Rasa*.

But we have seen in the beginning that medieval theorists somehow came to the conclusion that *nṛtta* is devoid of *rasa* and *bhāva*. Nobody has ever tried to question that view why *nṛtta* should be devoid of *rasa* except to mention that it is an *aṅgavikṣepa* requiring only *laya* and *tāla*. Even if this description, of course it is not precise, is accepted as it is, there is no reason why it should be devoid of *rasa*. If it be said that this is so because of its non-representational nature, then what about architecture, or music, i.e. such

forms of it as are not accompanied by words, like *rāgālāpa* or instrumental music? Are they also, then, devoid of *rasa*? But such a view is, on the face of it, absurd and untenable. Then what was the sin that *nṛtta* had committed, so that it should be excluded, *ex cathedra*, from the range of *rasa*?

The establishment of the *rasa* theory is an achievement for all times. But it is a fact that though from ancient times the method of its application in regard to the representational arts has been profusely discussed, in connection with non-representational arts it has been much, if not completely, neglected. In other words, the experience of the supra-mental state, attained through the non-representational arts, is not well explained in our aesthetic theory. Somehow the Indian mind is more attracted by the representational arts. There it has studied exclusively and exhaustively. This is perhaps the reason which leads the medieval theorists to declare that *nṛtta* is devoid of *rasa*. Whatever may be the reasons for this, it is, no doubt, a dangerous and debatable conclusion. It is a pity that such a contemporary champion of Indian culture as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy should be content to repeat it.[1]

Nṛtta, like *nṛtya*, was, as we have already seen, classified in the post-Bharata period as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*. There is no need to cite authority for this, as this is universally accepted. Similarly *tāṇḍava* is described by all the writers as made of vigorous (*uddhata*) *aṅgahāras* while *lāsya* is made of soft (*sukumāra* or *madhura*) *aṅgahāras*. In other words, *nṛtta* is of two kinds, vigorous (*tāṇḍava*) and soft (*lāsya*). Obviously these words, *uddhata* and *lāsya*, refer to the nature of physical movements. What is the reason for the difference in their nature? Ultimately one has to rely on the feeling, as an external manifestation of which physical movements appear, that is to say that the difference is due to the nature or the quality of the feeling by which physical movements are variously caused. Other than this there can be no explanation for the classification of *nṛtta*.

One may, however, argue that this classification is based on the nature of the physical movements of men and womenfolk. Some authors say that *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya* are to be performed by men and women respectively. In fact, this is the general tendency, of even

[1] M.G., p. 22.

authors like Śārṅgadeva and Kumbha-Rāṇā.[1] It is true that the movements of womenfolk are by nature softer than that of men. But this is purely relative, and it can hardly be denied that there can be some movements of womenfolk which are more vigorous than other movements of their own. Similarly some movements of men may also be softer. Thus, it would be meaningless to say or restrict that women alone should show the softer movements and men restrict themselves to vigorous movements. One might as well argue that the deportment of the women ought to be soft even in their angry moods and that men should be vigorous even in their grief or love! It is wrong to state categorically that *lāsya* should be performed only by women and *tāṇḍava* by men only. If there is some difference in the nature of the movements of men and women, that is a separate fact, but it cannot be taken as the basis of the classification of *nṛtta.* This is further proved by the accepted classification in the case of *nṛtya* which the medievalists admit to be expressive of *bhāvas.* Now either they have to accept that women should not show anger, or vigorous movements even in the moods like anger should find no place in women's dictionary. The same would apply to men, *mutatis mutandis,* in their moods like grief or love. To accept either of these restrictions would be false and fanciful. But picking up some medieval statements, many *Kathākaḷi* and *Bharatanāṭyam* artists and so called critics, boasting of their arts to be vigorous and soft respectively, have elevated this error to the rank of a genuine distinction. This is based on ignorance and shows a poor view of the possibilities of the respective arts.

If this classification should thus be based on the quality of feeling alone, we are bound to question the attempt on the part of medieval theorists to classify *nṛtta* as *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya.* For have they not denied the fact that *nṛtta* can evoke *rasa*? If this classification cannot be sacrificed, it ought also to be accepted that *nṛtta* can evoke *rasa* and *bhāvas* as perfectly as *nāṭya* and *nṛtya.*

Rasas are broadly classified into two groups on the basis of the quality of feeling: *dravībhāva,* the soft and melting state, and *dīpti,* radiance or brightness. In the Indian aesthetic theory only three *guṇas* or qualities are accepted, at least that is so from the eight century A.D., and two of these are called *mādhurya* and *ojas.* The

[1] S.R., Vol. IV, p. 3. S. Rāja, Vol. I, p. 30.

quality natural to rasas like *śṛṅgāra*, *karuṇa*, and so on is *mādhurya*, and of rasas like *vīra*, *roudra*, etc., the natural quality is *dīpti*. These are precisely the qualities also known as *sukumāra* and *uddhata*, a variation of *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava*, in other words. According to these qualities of feeling the external behaviour or the movements vary. It is quite natural that in the *rasas* like *śṛṅgāra*, *karuṇa* etc., the physical movements should tend to become soft while in the *rasas* such as *roudra*, *vīra*, they become vigorous, irrespective of sex. It is not claimed that this is what Bharata said. We have already stated, more than once, that there is no classification of either *nṛtta* or *nṛtya* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. These matters are being discussed here only to suggest the precise principle on which *nṛtta* and *nṛtya* can be, if desired, logically or legitimately classified. The medieval description of *tāṇḍava* and *lāsya*, to be made of vigorous and soft movements respectively, does not explain them fully or properly, because it leaves the real principle behind them untouched. The real principle behind this classification should be the *guṇa*, or quality of feeling.

Medieval theorists deny that *nṛtta* can evoke *rasa* and they say that it is *śobhāhetu*. This opinion is supposed to be based on Bharata's statements. As such they deserve examination.

> *'yadā prāptyartha marthānāṃ tajñai rabhinayaḥ kṛtaḥ*
> *kasmāt nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hyetat kaṃ svabhāva mapekṣate*
> *na gītakārthasambaddhaṃ nacāpyarthasya bhāvakam*
> *kasmāt nṛttaṃ kṛtaṃ hyetat gīteṣvāsāriteṣu ca'*[1]

These verses contain the questions about the nature and purpose of *nṛtta* and are posed by some *ṛṣis* who approached Bharata to know more about *nāṭya*. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* an important topic is usually introduced in this manner, that is in the form of a dialogue. Abhinava accepts that such dialogues do not refer to an actual fact but Bharata himself writes in that fashion (probably because that was the convention). He says this repeatedly and such a remark is made even in this place.[2] We need not go into details. For the present it is enough to note that it is Bharata's usual method of introducing an important topic. We should not worry over the useless problem of how the *ṛṣis*, being seekers of the knowledge of these arts, can put such questions before they are acquainted with several necessary

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, pp. 174-6.

[2] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 172.

things that are essential to its understanding. On the above verses Abhinava's commentary, as it appears in print, is much corrupted and in so far as it is intelligible the interpretation is open to doubt. He reads in them the three questions, establishing the identity of *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* and then finds a refutation of each of these in Bharata's answer found in the verses following the above ones. According to him Bharata describes *nṛtta* to be useful not just in *pūrvaraṅga* alone, but mainly in *nāṭya* (or play proper) as a beautifying factor, being a means to achieve the continuity in physical action and thus *kaiśikīvṛtti* too. One cannot help feeling a little uneasy at Abhinava's forceful twists in order to arrive at these conclusions. One need not attach much value to these twists and conclusions. His point that *nṛtta* works in *nāṭya* as a beautifying factor may, however, be discussed and we shall touch upon it in the pages that follow.

Let us now present the meaning of these verses as precisely as possible. 'When the *abhinaya* is created by the experts in order to communicate the *artha* (things), for what then is this *nṛtta* created and what is its nature? It has no relation either with the literal meaning of the songs being sung nor does it convey any kind of *artha*, —that is to say that it communicates neither the theme of the song nor any theme other than that of the song. Why is this *nṛtta* done while *gītas* and *āsāritas* are performed?'

In answer to these questions Bharata says :

> '*atrocyate nakhalvartham kañcinnṛtta mapekṣate*
> *kintu śobhāṃ janayatītyato nṛttaṃ pravartitam*
> *prāyeṇa sarvalokasya nṛtta miṣṭaṃ svabhāvataḥ*
> *māṅgalya miti kṛtvā ca nṛtta metat pravartitam*
> *vivāha-prasavāvāha-pramodābhyudayādiṣu*
> *vinodakāraṇaṃ ceti nṛtta metat pravartitam*'[1]

[1] N.Ś., Vol. I, Ch. 4, pp. 176-80. In this passage there are several variants in readings, but they cause no serious difference in meaning. At the end of the fourth line of this passage *pravartitam* is amended for *prakīrtitam*, because such a word obviously does not fit in. At the end of this passage there is one hemistich running as follows: '*ataś caiva pratikṣepāt bhūtasaṅghaiḥ pravartitāḥ*' (p. 180). Seemingly this belongs to the present topic. Abhinava comments on it in a way peculiar to him and that cannot be accepted. This hemistich needs correction, and if the change is made on the basis of general meaning, it might run somewhat like this: '*nṛtta meta dato hetor bhūtasaṅghaiḥ pravartitam*'. But we may not take this into serious account because it conveys no very important matter.

The idea expressed in these verses is this: It is true that *nṛtta* is in want of no theme i.e. conveys no theme, it is however instituted (*pravartitam*) because it causes the *śobhā*. Almost everyone naturally likes *nṛtta*, and moreover it is auspicious (*māṅgalya*) because of which it is instituted. Further, *nṛtta* is instituted, since it is amusement or pastime (*vinoda*) on various occassions such as marriage, delivery (*prasava*), reception (*āvāha*), delight (*pramoda*), prosperity (*abhyudaya*) and so on.

Here it should be realised that these questions about *nṛtta* are not made in relation with *nāṭya*, in other words here *nṛtta* is not thought of as auxiliary to *nāṭya* at all. Now one may argue that the very intention of dealing with *nṛtta* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is to determine the position of *nṛtta* as an auxiliary to *nāṭya*, otherwise there would have been no occasion to deal with it, and so, the present question about it should be considered in those very terms. But it is not true, because there is no evidence that *nṛtta* is brought in here as an auxiliary to *nāṭya*. As we have seen it was brought in in order to be introduced in *pūrvaraṅga*, preliminaries, but not in *nāṭya* proper. Even there, in *pūrvaraṅga*, it is not brought and utilised completely in the same way as practised by Śiva. *Abhinaya* is added to *nṛtta* and the resulting form, what we today call *nṛtya*, is utilised. Of course in *nṛtya* used in *pūrvaraṅga* there are some places where pure *nṛtta* is also used. However, one need not say that pure *nṛtta* is used in *pūrvaraṅga*. *Nṛtya* along with those pure *nṛtta* portions becomes one, i.e. *nṛtya* alone. Taking all this into consideration we can say that *nṛtta* is not used as such in *pūrvaraṅga*. Even in the present day a *nṛtya* like *Bharatanaṭyam*, or *Kathākaḷi* is not complete without such an adaptation of this technique in the 'breaks', i.e. pure *nṛtta* technique is used in *kalāsams*. If so, should we now call it *nṛtya* or a combination of *nṛtya* and *nṛtta*? We certainly do not call *Bharatanāṭyam* or *Kathākaḷi* the combination of both, but if we prefer to call them so, we should forget the name *nṛtya*, because there is no pure *nṛtya* in the sense of not having any connection with *nṛtta*. In the *nṛtya*, if we consider things as they are, some amount of *nṛtta* is inevitable. Nevertheless, we can call *Bharatanāṭyam nṛtya*, in fact we do so, because it is enjoyable for us as a representational art. In fact this matter is accepted by Vipradāsa when he says that '*nṛtte nṛtyaikadeśatvāt nṛtyaśabdo'pi vartate*' (for reference see p. 9, footnote 1). Similarly

the art to be used in *pūrvaraṅga* is *nṛtya*, though in some places the pure technique of *nṛtta* is utilised. Then a question arises, why then, is *nṛtta* expounded here? As we have seen, Bharata is able to create *nṛtya*, because he has learnt *nṛtta* from Taṇḍu. Moreover, as we know, *nṛtya* too requires in some places the pure technique of *nṛtta*. For this reason, Bharata expounds it as he learns it from Taṇḍu. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that *nṛtta* is not dealt with here as auxiliary to *nāṭya* and the present question about the purpose and nature of *nṛtta* should not be considered in that light, that is, as an auxiliary to *nāṭya*. This is further proved by Bharata's mention of several occassions for the performance of *nṛtta*.

Owing to the influence of *nṛtta* if certain new tendencies come into *nāṭya*, that would be an altogether different question, and that would not make *nṛtta* auxiliary to *nāṭya*. It is absurd to interpret Bharata's expression, *śobhāṃ janayati*, to mean that *nṛtta*, as auxiliary, works simply as a beautifying factor, but can never evoke *rasa* by itself. Perhaps it is for the reason that it is not a representational art, Bharata mentions *śobhā* instead of *rasa*. But it may be safely inferred that by *śobhā* he means nothing but *rasa*.

Before closing this topic, it will not be out of place to recall the fact that medieval theorists illogically designate *nṛtta* as *deśī*. Now, after noticing the general nature of *nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata one can easily realise that this *nṛtta* cannot but be of the *mārga* type.

Thus, we conclude: *nṛtta* is made of *aṅgahāras* which in their turn are made of *karaṇas*. *Nṛtta*, expounded by Bharata, is of the *mārga* type. It is, like *nāṭya* and *nṛtya*, quite capable of evoking *rasa*, although it is non-representational.

Nṛtya

So far as *nṛtya* goes there is no definition in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It cannot find place there for the reasons we have already noted while discussing its origin. To repeat them briefly, *nṛtya* was created by Bharata for the first time and no necessity of giving a special name and definition to it was felt at that time owing to its initial stage. So, for the present there is no way to find a definition of *nṛtya* from sources other than medieval and we have already noted the inadequecy, if not the impropriety, of the medieval definitions. At this

juncture, to arrive at a conclusion about *nṛtya* there is only one way left to us, namely an inquiry into its nature and practice. Any attempt in this direction should not be interpreted as an attempt at a definition, rather it should be taken to be a general description.

Śārṅgadeva says '*āṅgikābhinayai reva bhāvāneva vyanakti yat, tannṛtyaṃ.*'[1] Commenting on this, Kallinātha says that as there are not several *āṅgikābhinayas*, here '*āṅgikābhinayai reva*' means *sāttvika*, *vācika* and *āṅgika abhinayas*. Thus excluding *āhāryābhinaya*, he interprets that the thing which expresses only *bhāvas* through these three *abhinayas* is called *nṛtya*. But Siṅgabhūpāla takes the same compound word to mean *abhinaya* of different limbs and interprets *nṛtya* to have *āṅgikābhinaya* alone. The latter seems correct in view of one of Śārṅgadeva's statements[2] when it is considered in the light of his endeavour in writing the seventh chapter of the *Saṅgītaratnākara* with the main concern of expounding *nṛtya*, although such concern is not verbally expressed. In the beginning of our work we have noticed that Dhanika says that *nāṭya* requires *sāttvikābhinaya* in abundance, while *nṛtya* needs *āṅgiābhinaya*.

None of these views appears to be quite correct. Abhinava too seems[3] not to agree with such views and from the same source it appears that the supreme importance of *sāttvikābhinaya* also in the case of *nṛtya* is recognised by an ancient authority like Kohala. When a theme of a single song or at a time the themes of unconnected songs are enacted with the technique of *nṛtya*, as we often find today in *Bharatanāṭyam*, owing to practical difficulties it is not possible to pay so much attention to *āhārya* as in the case of drama. In *nṛtya* a single person represents several *nāyakas* or *nāyikās* or dramatis personae, but the *nartaka* or the *nartakī* does not change the costume and other things whenever there is a change of character, for that is not possible. That does not mean the total absence of *āhārya*. There is *āhārya*, because the *nartaka* wears a different costume which is not that of his personal life and the costume worn at that time would be that of the main or important character whom he has to represent. Thus in a sense there is *āhārya* of a kind in this case also. Apart from this, not only themes of single songs (*muktakagīta*) are enacted with

[1] S.R., Vol. IV, Ch. 7, pp. 11-12.
[2] ibid., verses 33-4, p. 14.
[3] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 173.

the *nṛtya* technique, but also several kinds of plays which we call *uparūpakas*. Here also one has to pay as much attention to *āhārya* as in the case with *nāṭya*. The technique of *nṛtya* is utilised on several occassions, as referred to here, in such cases the practicability of *āhārya* may vary from one case to the other. This variation should not be taken as a determining factor regarding the necessity or the role of *āhārya*. No doubt *āhārya* as such is required in *nṛtya* quite as much as in *nāṭya*.

At least in certain ages in connection with *nṛtya* it is said that the *nartaka* should sing, but at the same time keep *tāla* by the feet and communicate things (*artha*) by the rest of the body. Here controversy may arise over the significance of this prescription, as for example, whether there should be some communication while keeping the *tāla* with the feet or not and whether the song should be sung in such a way as to communicate something by it or not, and so on. But it is unnecessary here to go into any such details. Let us consider the necessity of *vācikābhinaya* in *nṛtya* without putting it as a rule that the *nartaka* should invariably utter the words. It is a general practice in both the cases—the representation of the theme of a *muktakagīta* and the representation of the theme of a play or *uparūpaka*—that words are uttered sometimes by *nartakas* themselves and at the other times by the men other than *nartakas*. Here it should be noted that if a singer sings a song in a concert, he does not sing on behalf of anybody. But in the performances of *nṛtya* if a singer sings the songs, he certainly sings on behalf of the *nartaka*. This means that in this case he must not violate the necessary tone and modulations required for the situation or that fit the character to be represented. If the singer violates this, the performance will go wrong completely. This proves the necessity of *vācikābhinaya*, although some difference may be noticed here when it is compared with the method of its application in *nāṭya*. This difference in the method of application does not in any way negate the necessity of *vācikābhinaya* in *nṛtya*.

If we now come to the problem of determining the necessity of *sāttvikābhinaya*, it is quite a difficult and delicate task. There is an agelong misunderstanding on the subject. Generally speaking, for nearly a thousand years the explanation of *sāttvikābhinaya* has practically reduced it to a status of *āṅgika*. What remains is just the name. There is a gradual change in the idea of this *abhinaya* till it reaches

this treacherous stage.[1] We cannot, at present, enter upon such a controversial topic but it may be mentioned that later writers assume that what we call *sāttvikabhāvas* are originally physical manifestations and yet they are considered to belong to the mental sphere, only because of the effort needed on the part of the actor to show them. This is a totally wrong assumption. Basically and always *sāttvikabhāvas* are mental conditions, i.e. whether in everyday life or in an actor or in a *sahṛdaya*, aesthete. In the very beginning while explaining the meaning of *abhinaya* we have mentioned that *sāttvikābhinaya* is a mental act. It is as highly necessary for *nṛtya* as for *nāṭya*. To state that *nṛtya* requires this *abhinaya* less than *nāṭya*, would be a different and precise way of stating that *nṛtya* requires *rasa* and *bhāvas* in a less degree. Such a statement would be meaningless. *Nṛtya* requires *sāttvikābhinaya* quite as much as *nāṭya* does. So far as *āṅgikābhinaya* goes, there is none to dispute its right. Everybody agrees that *nṛtya* needs it.

From the above it ought to be clear that all the four *abhinayas* are as necessary to *nṛtya* as to *nāṭya*, that is to say the difference between them does not lie in the number of *abhinayas* which these arts require. Essentially the difference lies in the mode of use or application of some of the *abhinayas* in them. So far as *sāttvikābhinaya* is concerned there cannot exist any difference in its application. And in the case of *āhārya* too, one may assume the possibility of difference of application. Then, the difference of method is possible in case of *vācika* and *āṅgika*. We have already noted the difference in connection with *vācika*. It may be further pointed out that almost all the time music is essential in *nṛtya*, which is comparatively quite unimportant and optional too in the case of *nāṭya*. The most characteristic feature is the mode of application of *āṅgika*. It is easy to understand this matter when the fact that *nṛtya* is a resultant form of art, the result of the combination of *nṛtta* and *abhinaya*, is borne in mind. We have already noted that the life of *nṛtta* lies in its formal beauty and one has to concentrate on certain factors of composition in order to obtain that beauty. In the case of *nṛtta* the whole attention is concentrated on the form, but so much attention cannot be paid to this aspect in *nṛtya* when *abhinaya* is added to it, because in such a case it would

[1] We have worked on this subject covering the whole period from Bharata to the present times. This work has not yet been published.

not be possible to communicate things (*artha*) or represent a theme. But that does not in any way mean a total sacrifice of the formal beauty. In *nṛtya karaṇas* as such cannot be retained, but their essential features are, and these are adapted in such a way as to suit *abhinaya*. Owing to *abhinaya*, *nṛtya* becomes a representational art. Again owing to the essential features of *karaṇas* or *nṛtta*, there is no possibility for *lokadharmī*, the realistic mode of *abhinaya*, as is possible in *nāṭya*, but always *nāṭyadharmī*, the idealistic mode alone is possible. This is why, although *abhinayahastas*, *dṛṣṭis*, etc., which are practised in *nāṭya*, are used in *nṛtya* also, yet the effect produced by *nṛtya* differs from the effect produced by *nāṭya*. Further, in *nṛtya*, like *nṛtta*, the movements of limbs should invariably follow *laya* and *tāla* which is not the case with *nāṭya*. Owing to all these factors, *nṛtya*, though a hybrid art, differs from *nāṭya* and *nṛtta*. It has its own characteristics, and it is better to know why.

However much it may differ from *nṛtta*, *nṛtya* cannot totally sacrifice *nṛtta*, as is proved by practice and also from the texts. Whatever characteristics it may possess, without some touch of *nṛtta* as such it tends to be tedious. That is why one finds in it an occasional touch of pure *nṛtta* in the breaks or *kalāsams*. But although *nṛtya* contains *nṛtta* in some form, yet it has, as already said, an independent existence of its own.

Nṛtya, with its peculiar mode of application of *abhinayas*, is a representational art and is capable of expressing *rasa* just as *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* are.

THEIR RELATIONS DISCUSSED

WE have seen that Bharata defines *nāṭya* and *nṛtta* on the basis of technique and we do not find him restricting these arts to certain effects alone, as the medieval authors do. His definitions are quite revealing, perhaps that is because he bases himself, unlike the medieval authors, primarily on the technique. In this work we have discussed *nṛtya* following closely his line of approach, as his definition of it cannot be found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Now it is worthwhile to note the relation existing between them. Owing to the necessity of coming to certain conclusions in regard to the nature of these arts, we have already to some extent, discussed about the

relation, before dealing with Bharata's definitions. There we have seen that, at the beginning, only the two arts, *nṛtta* and *nāṭya*, were flourishing but independent of each other, i.e. without any mutual contact or influence. Then in Bharata's time it was contemplated to introduce *abhinaya* into *nṛtta*, *abhinaya* which till that time was known to *nāṭya* alone, and it was added too. As a result we had *nṛtya*. Thus in this sense *nṛtya* is a deliberate art. Therefore there should not be any doubt about the fact that it is the influence of *nāṭya* that has lead to the making of this art. The influence of *nāṭya* on *nṛtta* is thus obvious.

But the influence that *nṛtta* exercises on *nāṭya* is a more delicate subject to trace precisely at this stage. Abhinava states[1] that *kaiśikī-vṛtti*,[2] which is a 'must' in the case of *śṛṅgārarasa* and which is necessary also in the case of other *rasas* like *roudra*, is not possible without *nṛtta*, because *nṛtta* is the source that provides *valanā*, *vartanā*, and so forth. Without it *kaiśikī-vṛtti* cannot be effective. This idea is at the back of his mind when he makes several statements about subjects like Bharata's reference to *nṛtta* in connection with *abhinaya*,[3] *nāṭya-dharmī*[4] and others.[5] He says very clearly that without *nṛtta* gaps in the physical movements cannot be filled (*chidracchādana*) and a continuity of these movements cannot be maintained (*alātacakra-pratimatā*). Such statements of his do not mean that *kaiśikī* is invented because of *nṛtta*. What it means is that because of *nṛtta kaiśikī* has flourished and the emphasis is given to its profuse utilization in *nāṭya*. Here it is also necessary to point out that it is not quite clear whether Abhinava thinks that *vartanā*, *valanā*, etc., are used in *nāṭya* exactly in the same way as in *nṛtta*. If he thinks that these should be used in the same way, that cannot be acceptable because there is no such necessity.

[1] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 1, pp. 21-2.

[2] *Vṛttis* are four—*kaiśikī*, *ārabhatī*, *sāttvatī* and *bhāratī*—and the concept of *vṛtti* was misunderstood for a long time. This is the reason why one finds a lot of inconsistency in this matter in the later treatises. In modern times some attempts have been made in this direction by scholars like V. Rāghavan, but their validity is yet to be established. It needs serious investigation and separate treatment, so it is better, for the present, not to enter into such details.

[3] A.B., Vol. I, Ch. 4, p. 98.

[4] ibid. Vol. II, pp. 215-18.

[5] ibid. Vol. I, pp. 179-80.

Apropos Abhinava's observations we may also draw attention to the fact that Bharata prescribes (Ch. 12) certain matters to be observed in the gait and the sitting, lying, and other postures. A large number of such matters are concerned with bodily compositions. This prescription may be due to the influence of *nṛtta*. By this we do not mean that until *nṛtta* is studied it is not possible to observe such principles. They can certainly be observed, because all of them go along with and follow the psychology. A man in an angry mood naturally walks stiff and certain limbs fall in one line, similarly a man with happiness in his heart walks, sits and acts very differently and then his limbs follow another line or composition. These go along with the psychology and here there is no necessity for any *nṛtta*. But there is every possibility that owing to *nṛtta* one may become more conscious of the principles of composition. It might have happened thus with the men of an earlier age. If the very conscious type of the prescription of some of the rules is noticed it appears that *nṛtta* might have worked behind it as an active principle or a guiding factor. A greater consciousness gives a greater effect, not necessarily a bad one, certainly such is not the case with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. What other effects, if at all any, *nṛtta* may have on *nāṭya* is at present not clear. At the present stage it is difficult to make out the exact nature of the influence of *nṛtta* on *nāṭya* in matters of composition, but, as seen above, it is certain that *nṛtta* exerts its influence on *nāṭya* in this line at the time of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

Cārīs, as seen already, are one of the elements which make *karaṇas* the basic units of *nṛtta*. Loosely speaking these may be called in English 'steps' of the dance. Now it goes without saying that originally these belong to *nṛtta* proper rather than *nāṭya*. This would be quite obvious even if the nature and form of most of the *cārīs* are observed. These *cārīs* were prescribed to be used in *nāṭya* too. That means these are a later adoption into *nāṭya* when both of them came into contact. So one can add this matter to the list of the influences that *nṛtta* exerted on *nāṭya*. Perhaps this is the reason why Bharata expounds them not near to the topic of *nṛtta* but in the midst of the subjects that properly belong to *nāṭya*. But we are not in favour of giving a similar explanation in the case of *nṛttahastas* which are also one of the elements that make *karaṇas*. At the same

time we are not for the present in a position to give any satisfactory explanation to this.

Here it will not be in vain to add something which may help in removing the possibility of misunderstanding regarding the nature of the adoption of *cārīs* into *nāṭya*. Though *cārīs* are adopted into *nāṭya* yet that does not in any way mean that in all the situations *cārīs* should be used in *nāṭya*. On the contrary, their use is restricted to only a few situations like the fight or war or similar things. Among thirty-two *cārīs* there are a few which can be used in some occasions other than war, procession, etc. Let us illustrate this point. Take for example *adhyardhikā*. This can be used in confusion or in startling and so on, similarly *eḍakākrīḍitā* may be used in children's escaping from their parents' sight or sometimes in case of *Vidūṣaka's* walk and so on. In such cases these need not actually be called *cārīs*, then they would be simply given ways of walking. One variety of *cārī* is gone through, or repeated, for the situations as exemplified here. That is all. But what would follow after that may not be a *cārī*. That is why such movements may not be called *cārīs*. A *cārī*, to be called so, depends on what follows next. Given steps, when they are well-knit, are called *cārīs*, this being true from the point of view of *karaṇas* as well as *maṇḍalas*. So this gives us an idea that the same movement of the leg is differently described according to the total movement. This is one fact that should be clearly known. There are other *cārīs* which can never be used singly as is possible in the case of those mentioned above. These are used only in some cases like the dance, fight and so on. So one should decide the question of the nature of *cārīs* taking all of them into consideration. As has been mentioned above, these *cārīs* are used in *nāṭya* in situations like fight or procession and so on, but not everytime. The movements of the legs that are used in *nāṭya* generally or almost all of the times are *gatis*, gaits, but not *cārīs*. In the closing remarks of the eleventh chapter devoted to *maṇḍalas*, Abhinava clearly points out this matter. Dramatists of ancient times might have found these *cārīs* useful in producing the effects of war or fighting in *nāṭya* where actual fighting is prohibited. It seems that *cārīs* are adapted in situations, that demand some *laya* and *tāla* or the play of drums. It is true that by the use of the steps suitable for the play of drums very good effects may be produced. So there is some ground for the

inference of the reason for adopting *cārīs* from *nṛtta* into *nāṭya*. Bharata's description of *nyāyas* in the same chapter also may prove the fact that *cārīs* are meant to be used only in those situations, as war, procession and so on. So even if one finds regularised steppings in the dramatic performances of some countries, as for example Java and others, the same should not be inferred in the case of ancient Indian drama too only because there were cultural exchanges among these countries. Therefore our conclusions that *cārīs* are used in *nāṭya* only on a few occasions like war and procession and that this incidence may be counted among the influences that *nṛtta* exerts on *nāṭya*, are justified and not without reason.

Apart from this there is a possibility of its affecting the concept of *nāṭyadharmī*, yet now we cannot say or show any such incidence. We mention it only as a possibility.

Whether *nṛtya*, which is a result of the meeting of *nṛtta* and *nāṭya*, had, as such, influenced them after its developing as a full-fledged art or not, if it did, how was it done? These are extremely difficult questions to answer, because the works written after Bharata, the age when *nṛtya* developed a great deal are not available to us and the still later works written after the ninth century A.D., do not throw any light on this point. On the contrary they create much confusion.

ARE THESE DEFINITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL THE PREVAILING ARTS?

UNLESS they are viewed in their proper persepective, our understanding of the ancient theories would be not only incorrect, they would also be incomplete unless they are also studied in relation with the present day needs. Nothing can prove to be significant unless it is useful to our life in some way or the other. So let us see how far these ancient definitions are applicable to the arts prevailing in the different regions of India. A comprehensive survey is, however, not possible now. Only a few of the schools of arts will be mentioned here in order to illustrate our point of view and some of its implications.

Bharata's definition of *nāṭya* proves good even today, although dramas, so far as the structural aspect of the play goes, are not written in the present age in accordance with the rules laid down in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. His definition of *nāṭya* is still valid, because it is made

on broad lines and not to suit the needs and conveniences of a particular age. The experience of the world as a whole and *abhinayas*, these are, as we have already seen, the two important aspects in his definition. His definition is basic and it is impossible to write a drama in the present age as well as in the future by going against his overall definition.

If we come to Bharata's definition of *nṛtta*, that too cannot in any way be said to be invalid, but it is applicable only in a limited field. When *nṛtta* is taken to be non-representational, today there are several schools of arts that may be so described. Take, for example, Garba, Santhālī, tribal and other dances. The secret of arts like these lies in the repetition of the same or very limited units of movements by several individuals, which may be well explained by the analogy of rhythm as understood in plastic arts like architecture, where rhythm is understood to be the successive placing of the same pattern. *Nṛtta* expounded by Bharata is built up by vivid varieties of *karaṇas* as basic units. A notable difference is that *karaṇa*, the basic unit of Bharata's *nṛtta* is governed by well-calculated and more logical principles, but that is not the case with the units of movements of the arts mentioned above, even if they too are governed by some kind of rules. That is why it is difficult to call the units of the movement of these arts *karaṇas*. In that case, Bharata's definition does not cover these arts. But it is certainly applicable to the art that is performed generally as a part of the school of art called nowadays *Bharatanāṭyam*.

Considering this fact, one may say that if the medieval definition of *nṛtta* as *aṅgavikṣepa* is accepted it may serve both cases—*nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata as well as *nṛttas* prevailing today. We have already said that the word *aṅgavikṣepa* is neither selective nor capable of denoting the meaning required. In this connection it may also be pointed out that no medieval theorist keeps in his mind arts like these while giving this definition. On the contrary, every one among them keeps in his mind mainly, if not only, *nṛtta* as expounded by Bharata. So it is out of the question to accept the medieval definition of *nṛtta* and to apply it to modern art forms.

Here it will not be out of place to mention that *nṛttas* like those mentioned above are, generally speaking, intimately connected with occasions of mainly social life. It is for this purpose that they

are learnt, rather it is through these occasions that they are learnt, not as a special training, but as a duty, a participation in the life of the group. For this reason, these will certainly come under the category of *deśī*, popular. But the *nṛtta* expounded by Bharata is opposite to these in every case. There one must undergo a fairly strenuous training under a competent master. Also, it is not restricted to any given occasion of social or individual life. Nor is there any restriction in regard to the place of its performance. Thus it is *mārga*, classical. However classically inclined one may be, a full or correct view of Indian dances cannot ignore that the *nṛttas* belong to the *deśī* category.

Now for *nṛtya*. We have already noted that it is a representational art, which implies that it is based on the experience of the world as a whole. We have also come to the conclusion that it requires four kinds of *abhinayas*. Now the question may arise—what is then the difference between *nāṭya* and *nṛtya* if both are the experience of the world communicated by four *abhinayas*? The answer is that in *nṛtya* the mode of using *abhinayas* is different from that of *nāṭya*. This is the most striking difference between the two, to which may be added that every physical movement in *nṛtya* should follow *laya* and *tāla* as in *nṛtta*. In fact *nṛtya* inherits this quality from *nṛtta* itself. The *Nṛtya* that is under question should possess the qualities of or be in conformity with *nṛtta* and *abhinaya* as expounded by Bharata. What is called nowdays *Bharatanāṭyam* is in accord with the account given. This school of art can be explained almost in every respect by Bharata's theory and it follows Bharata's technique almost entirely. That is why it contains the marvellous formal beauty of Bharata's *nṛtta*. So far as the formal or geometrical beauty goes, no other school of *nṛtya*, including *Kathākaḷi*, can exceed this art. Similarly no art can stand by its side in so far as richness in variety of movement goes. The school of art called *Kathākaḷi* is based for the most part on a different kind of technique, there is no doubt about it, yet certain features which have a great bearing on the aesthetic beauty, are in accord with the principles laid down by Bharata. Thus, in one sense, perhaps a broad sense, these schools —*Bharatanāṭyam* and *Kathākaḷi*—may be said to belong to the same category and certainly are *nṛtya* in type.

Apart from these two, there are other schools of arts, for instance,

Maṇipūrī, which poses an entirely different kind of problem. In our own days, plays like *Śyāmā* and *Citrāṅgadā*, written by Rabindranath Tagore, are in line with *Maṇipūrī* because they too pose similar problems. The schools like these have a theme and so they are representational. It is true that in this type of art the theme is not conveyed in the same way as in *Bharatanāṭyam* and *Kathākaḷi*. Just because *abhinaya* in the exact sense of Bharata's definition is not here, it would be a gross mistake to deny the fact that in these too something is conveyed in a given way. One may be tempted to say that the latter type of *abhinaya* as explained by Abhinava may hold good for schools like these. But it should be borne in mind that Abhinava gives that kind of explanation to the word *abhinaya*, only keeping in view the songs written in praise of the gods as part of *pūrvaraṅga*. In this explanation the important thing is the bringing out of the essential meaning of the song into the performer's own awareness. This is not the case with the schools of art under discussion. If at all acceptable, this type of *abhinaya*, limited by its own nature, does not really suit the schools like *Maṇipūrī*. Having a theme and conveying something in their own way, *Maṇipūrī* and the like are *nṛtya* types of arts. These problems await further investigation and explanation.

There is, again, another difficulty when taking the *Kathak* school of art into consideration. Speaking about this art, people sometimes deliver highly philosophical lectures, but in spite of them one can notice certain predominant features in it, which features seem similar to what Abhinava explains regarding the characteristics of *Dombikā*. In fact it is a nice question whether this art be the *nṛtya* type or the *nṛtta* type.

As we have seen, *nṛtya* developed into a full-fledged state within a short time and continued as a highly popular art from the Gupta age. The brightest days of this art were the days in which Indian culture left its strong impress even beyond the boundaries of India, first through Buddhism and later also through Hinduism. In those days if anything went outside India then that was mostly through religion. Of course if we think in terms of pure possibility nothing can be denied. But if we think in terms of the nature of things, there is little chance for *nṛtta* to spread outside through religion, because, being non-representational, it could not serve the purpose of religious

education. Similarly *nāṭya* is too complicated to be used as an instrument among foreign folk. So, by elimination, there was every chance for *nṛtya* to reach foreign lands and become part and parcel of those cultures. Moreover *nṛtya* is always accompanied by music, the most attractive form of art. If one studies the subject, traces of *nṛtya* may be found even now in those lands. But such an investigation has its own dangers and difficulties. If one is not careful enough, one may do injustice to those cultures by claiming too much. This, unfortunately, has been the general tendency. Similarly one may do harm if the traces found elsewhere are attributed unduly to Indian *nāṭya*. The history of *nṛtya* is more complicated than any of the allied arts for the reason that it had spread in foreign lands while in the land of its origin the treatises of early days have grown obscure.

To judge by the tone and emphasis of well-known scholars, our study of these arts even within the boundaries of India seems to have missed the truth of the matter. For instance, Coomaraswamy once said, 'The old Indian dramatic art survives, although precariously, in the *Kathākaḷi* of the Malabar provinces, and particularly at the Keralakalāmaṇḍalam near Trichur.'[1] Now we know that the art being taught in Keralakalāmaṇḍalam is not dramatic art but it is *Kathākaḷi* which, as we have seen before, is *nṛtya*. Further the said place is a centre only for teaching this art, while in all parts of Kerala this art is still a living force. It would be wrong and misleading to confine these arts to certain places or centres alone, only because of the fact that we have come to know of certain places. If such an attitude is admitted, one may as well boast of Tamilnad as being the only centre for *Bharatanāṭyam*, for the simple reason that Tamilnad has played an important role for the last few decades in reviving our attitude towards this art through popularising it and finding a place for it in the educated society and in the curriculum of studies. In fact, the same art is employed in *Kūcipūḍi* tradition in Andhra and in *Yakṣagānam* in Karnāṭaka. Apart from these, the technique of *Bharatanāṭyam* is variously used in these states. We cannot in this matter exclude even Kerala where *Kathākaḷi* is more popular and predominant. Thus *Bharatanāṭyam* is used, may be with a different name and subtle variations in the

[1] M.G., p. 22.

manner of its adaptation, in the whole of South India. If we take these present-day facts into consideration it is meaningless to confine these arts—*Bharatanāṭyam*, *Kathākaḷi*, *Maṇipūrī* and *Kathak*—to limited areas when people all over India are learning them.

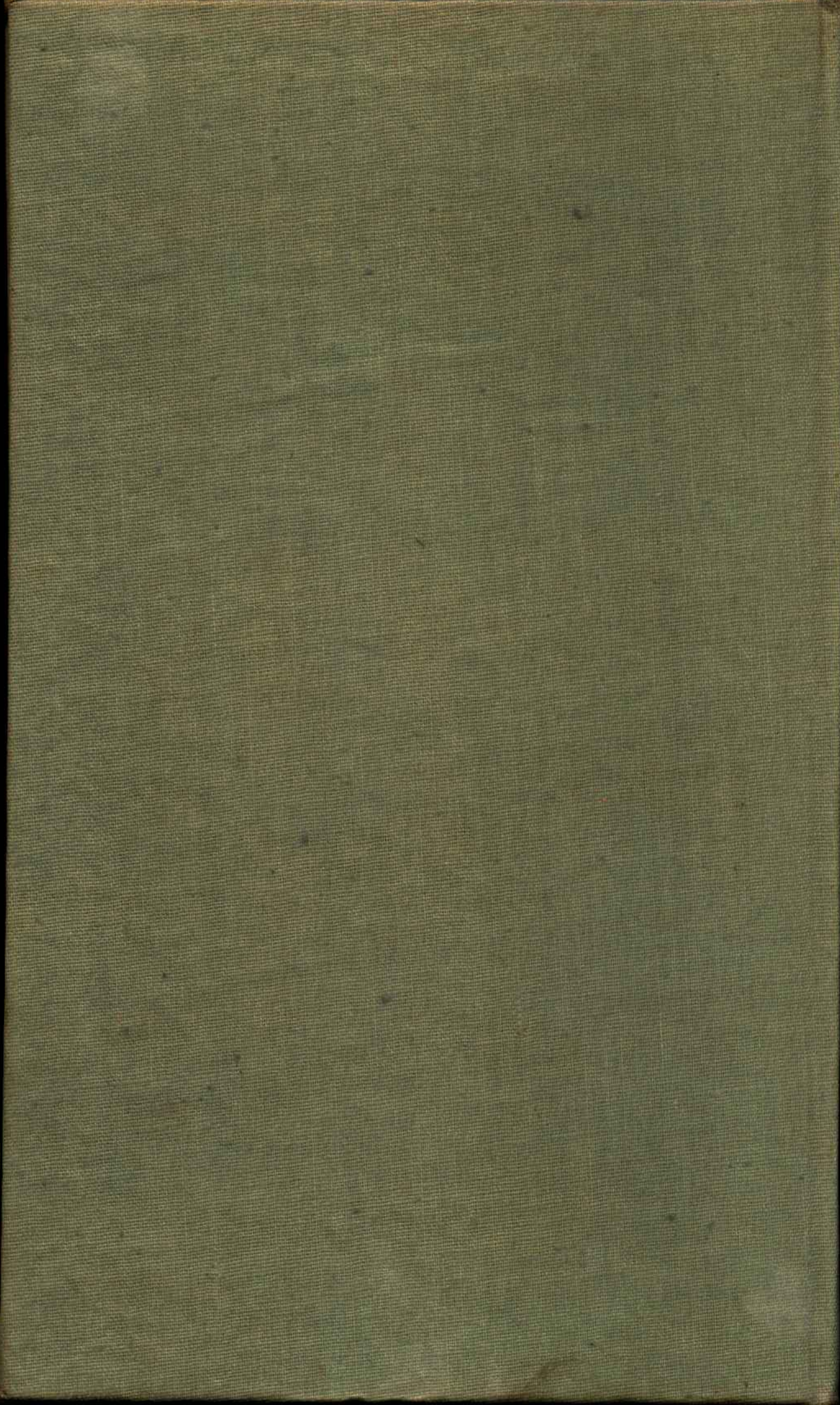
It is certain that all the prevailing arts cannot be explained on the basis of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Nor is it necessary that all the arts should be in accordance with the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. It is not wrong in any sense in the case of different arts not to be confined to Bharata's technique. Such a state is not at all a sign of lacking in something very important, as a few are unreasonably afraid of admitting, thinking that it would reduce them to an inferior status. Unfortunately we do not find any treatises which explain these different arts. *Kathākaḷi* enthusiasts boast of *Hastalakṣaṇa-dīpikā* too much. In fact, it is an insignificant work and does not explain one-hundredth of that art. Similarly *Bharatanāṭyam* people boast of *Abhinayadarpaṇa* to be a *chef d'oeuvre*. But, if this work is completely ignored there will not be any loss. As we have said more than once, *Bharatanāṭyam* can be explained adequately by the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. So far as *Maṇipūrī* and *Kathāk* are concerned no authoritative treatise on them has been heard to exist. Thus, except *Bharatanāṭyam* no other school of *nṛtya* or *nṛtta* can now be explained in every detail.

Sometimes a long list of names of ancient *ācāryas* is given, for example, Nandikeśvara, Arjuna, Uṣā, Pārvatī and so on. At the same time it is also claimed that all such *ācāryas* founded their own schools and wrote treatises. But no such treatise has as yet come to light. In any case, nobody has tried to show how these schools are related, or how these differ from each other. So, such statements, which glorify our past, are certainly pleasing to hear but add nothing to our understanding.

If we like to see these arts come into their own, these should be explained on a rational basis. A great task of reconstruction awaits us. There are outstanding problems, old and new, to be worked out. The ancient theories would not do for all our present needs or problems. Both ancient and modern art should be studied with equal earnestness. We cannot neglect any school or kind of art. Each is effective in its own way. A detailed study of present practice, without being always tied to ancient theoretical works, remains a necessity. Even in the case of *Bharatanāṭyam* the theory available

from the *Nāṭyaśāstra* should be studied with the help of practice. This is an immediate necessity, for it may give us the insight and the scientific method needed to study the arts which have so far no treatises of their own as well as those that possess a *śāstra* of their own but not a comprehensive one.

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STUCCO IMAGES

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